Stewardship in the Bible

A Bethany Study Course

By ORVAL D. PETERSON

LIBRARY
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA

ORVAL DOUGLAS PETERSON is now president of the National Benevolent Association, St. Louis Mo. He holds A.B. and B.D. degrees from Eugene Bible University and in 1945 Butler University conferred on him the D.D. degree. He also attended the University of Oregon and Union Theological Seminary. He has held pastorates at churches in Carlton, Oregon; Dallas, Oregon; Lewiston, Idaho; and Yakima, Washington. Dr. Peterson was married to Mary Elizabeth Grabill, December 1, 1921. They have two children, Robert Eugene and Mary Eloise.

Dr. Peterson is the author of *That We May Know Him* and *Washington and Northern Idaho Disciples,* and many articles and short stories. With Mrs. Peterson he attended the World Convention of Churches of Christ at Leicester, England, in 1935; he was president of the Washington and North Idaho State Convention in 1940-1941; he is a member of the Board of Trustees of Northwest Christian College, Eugene, Oregon. He was third vice-president of the 1950 International Convention held in Oklahoma City, Okla.

STEWARDSHIP
in
THE BIBLE

by Orval D. Peterson

Clifford A. Cole
Memorial Library
of the
DISCIPLES SEMINARY
FOUNDATION
Gift of
First Christian Church
Alhambra, California

Table of Contents

		Page
Introduction		3
Part One	**The Relation of Man to Property**	
Chapter 1.	The Origin of Possessions	6
Chapter 2.	God and Man's Possessions	13
Chapter 3.	Society and Man's Possessions	19
Part Two	**Stewardship in the Old Testament**	
Chapter 4.	The Separated Portion	25
Chapter 5.	Worship and Stewardship	31
Chapter 6.	The Danger of Avarice	38
Part Three	**Stewardship Teachings of Jesus**	
Chapter 7.	Talents, Time, and Possessions	45
Chapter 8.	The Motives for Stewardship	53
Chapter 9.	Stewardship and the Great Commission	60
Part Four	**Stewardship Teachings of the Apostles**	
Chapter 10.	Man's Accountability to God	67
Chapter 11.	Proportionate Giving	74
Chapter 12.	Tithing—An Approved Principle	81
Chapter 13.	The Cross and Stewardship	88
Audio-Visual Materials		95

Ninth Printing—1962

The outline for this study was drafted by the Curriculum Committee of The United Christian Missionary Society, the predecessor of the present-day Curriculum and Program Council. The manuscript was reviewed by members of the Youth Work and Adult Work Committees.

Unless otherwise indicated, the quotations from the Bible are from the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible, copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ and used by permission.

Printed in the United States

Introduction

A PRINCE, according to an old story, sent a token of his love to his betrothed, but when it was received it proved to be an iron egg. With disappointment and anger, the princess threw it down. In time, however, her curiosity caused her to examine it closely. Quite by accident her hand touched a secret spring which caused the outer case to open, revealing an egg of brass. Seeking further, she found another secret spring which revealed an egg of silver which when opened disclosed an egg of gold. When the secret of this was found, it proved to contain a magnificent diamond of rare beauty.

So it is in the study of Christian stewardship. To the uninitiated and the beginner it may at first repel or at least appear uninteresting. It touches too many people where it hurts. However, a study of the subject as revealed in the Bible and as experienced through many generations of Christians proves to be rewarding. Stewardship is discovered to be the true way of life.

Someone has said, "One look is worth a thousand words." In Job 42:5 we read,

> "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,
> but now my eye sees thee."

There is more to the subject than just studying it. Stewardship proves itself when practiced.

The practice of stewardship is essential to spiritual growth. If this were not so, surely Jesus would not have given it major emphasis in his teachings. McConaughy in *Money the Acid Test* points out that of thirty-eight parables of Jesus, sixteen are on stewardship. Throughout the Gospels, one in every six verses deals with this subject. It also occupies a prominent place throughout

the entire Bible. According to Versteeg, in *When Christ Controls,* nearly 60 per cent of the Bible deals with it.

This study cannot exhaust the subject of stewardship in the Bible. It will have done much if it will help relate attitudes and practices to possessions. The instructor should always keep before his class the thought that man is God's potential partner, a partnership based to a large degree on man's faithfulness as a steward of material possessions. The Bible is always the best source for teaching and is rich with illustrations.

The church of the first century had the Romans in a state of baffled expectancy. They could never anticipate the corner of the Roman Empire in which the church would "break out" next. It was a strange kind of power. The mighty Romans paid magnificent tribute to the early Christian Church in that they expected something to happen. Does the church, because of its vital power, throw the world into an amazed expectancy today? Such a consequence requires the revival of stewardship.

In *Stewardship and Tithing,* by George F. Bradford, Jesse M. Bader said, "One of the big stewardship sins of the past and the present, is in the substitution manufactured and practiced for the Scriptural plan of giving. If the principle of the tithe should be practiced in the churches, it would bring about a spiritual revival. Christians of the twentieth century under Christ dare not give less than the Jews gave under Moses . . . A new generation of Christians can be produced in the churches if they are properly taught in stewardship."[1] This is not to imply that tithing is the whole of stewardship. There is more. Stewardship applies to all of life; time, talents, *and* money. These studies emphasize possessions.

There is an Arabian legend of a prince who wasted his money in riotous living. One day a vision led him to dig

[1]Published by The Bethany Press.

up the floor of his room where he discovered a strange apartment, and in this apartment an urn. In the urn was a key which gave him the desire to find the lock to which it belonged. He searched around the walls until he found a secret door which responded to the key. He was surprised to find himself in another chamber containing twelve pedestals, eleven of which bore statues of pure gold. On the empty pedestal was an inscription bidding him search for the missing statue with the promise that a great discovery awaited the one who would seek diligently. This legend reminds us there is always a great discovery awaiting those who are willing to explore for themselves the truths God has placed in his Word. To the painstaking searcher after his will there will be discovered progressive revelations of God's plans for his people. Stewardship is like that. It seems to have little to offer but it demands much. It requires that one give time, talents, and money in generous portions to the church and its enterprises. But as the disciple moves from one stewardship truth in a growing spiritual experience he will make the grand discovery that stewardship is the way of great living.

The following books will help both teacher and students:

The Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible.

The Bible, an American Translation, edited by J. M. Powis Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed.

Abingdon Bible Commentary.

Stewardship in the New Testament Church, by Holmes Rolston.

A Christian and His Money, by Richard L. Ownbey.

The Message of Stewardship, by Ralph S. Cushman.

More Stewardship Parables of Jesus, by R. C. Long.

Great Stewards of the Bible, by John E. Simpson.

When Christ Controls, by John M. Versteeg.

Part One

The Relation of Man to Property

1. The Origin of Possessions

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. . .

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, and in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

—Genesis 1:1-2, 26-27, 31.

AN INTEREST in origins is common to all. We are fascinated by the stories that reveal the sources of English words, the reasons for old customs, and the origins of racial or national practices around the world. We are delighted by the story of electric lights, the experiments of the Wright brothers with the airplane, the discovery of an inexpensive process for making aluminum, the origins of rocks, mountain systems, and continents—and the stars. This universal interest is the drive back of all scientific and philosophical research.

In contrast, people are not generally interested in the true source of their personal possessions. They know how they got their money, their cars, their homes, and investments. They got them through days and years of labor and the painstaking saving of money. Many go no farther in their thinking. This overlooks deep spiritual truth. Basic to our Christian faith is the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. Christian faith looks to him as the giver of all good gifts. Basic to Christian stewardship is the understanding that God is the source of all our possessions and of our ability to use them for profit and for happiness.

We are challenged by probing questions. "Where did these materials we work with have their beginning? How does it happen that they may be used, transformed, and apparently consumed and yet, in some form, are here for the enrichment of generation after generation? What are the forces at work, holding all together, keeping everything in balance, and moving ever onward?" Our highest thoughts tell us there must be an infinitely wise and all powerful creator. We call him God.

Read Deuteronomy 10:14; 1 Chronicles 29:11-12.

The 180th meridian, an imaginary line, is the International Date Line. When travelers cross this meridian they must either add a day or subtract a day, depending upon their direction. When Rear-Admiral Byrd made his second trip to the South Pole he flew as close as possible along the 180th meridian. He reported later in *National Geographic* magazine that even without wind drift, for which he could make adequate correction, it is impossible for a navigator to fly along a mathematical line. There was an interesting and mysterious consequence of Byrd's flight. His plane was constantly zig-zagging from today into tomorrow and back again.

This is a parable. It seems that the church makes the same zig-zagging sort of progress in proportion to the

stewardship of its members. Proper recognition of God's true ownership relates the Christian to the present and to the future. The church and its message is for today and for tomorrow. Through the proper stewardship of money the church becomes the means whereby we lay up treasures in this life and in the life to come. So, the true meaning of possessions is this: God is the owner. Man is the steward.

1. The Divine Creator—God

Read Exodus 20:11, Nehemiah 9:6, Psalm 102:25, Acts 14:15, Hebrews 11:3.

The Bible's strength and glory is in the fact that in it is God's Word to the world, a progressive revelation of himself as creator climaxed in his incarnation through his Son, Jesus Christ. John Sutherland Bonnell, of New York City, in effect once said that the basic affirmations of the Bible, and Genesis in particular, are that the world and all its teeming humanity came into being through God's creative activity, and the crown of that creation was man, made in the image of God and gifted with the power to have fellowship with his "Great Originator."

The psalmist sang,

"Know that the LORD is God:
It is he that made us, and we are his;—
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture"
(Ps. 100:3).

God, the foundation of being and power, formed man of common dust of the earth; not gold-dust, or jewel-dust, but the ordinary dust of the ground. The body of man is a wonderful construction (Ps. 139:15-16). However, the soul of man was "breathed into his nostrils." Thus his soul is of heaven and from heaven. The eternal of man was not made of the earth, and is not earthy. It therefore should not cleave to the earth. Man's soul came from the

Father of spirits; consequently man should be concerned about the things of the spirit. It is tragic when he devotes his energies and his loyalties entirely to the things of the earth.

The Scriptures make clear the fact that God lays claim to all things as his own by right of creation. Therefore, our "possessions" are not ours but his. We are tenants in the earth and stewards of what he has given us. Washington Gladden once remarked, "The essence of sin is setting oneself in the center of the universe." We sin when we make our personal pleasures, our individual profit, or the acquirement of material things for ourselves alone the first law of our lives.

Alfred H. C. Morse in *Eternal Contrasts* writes, "We deceive ourselves by disguising our vices, for instance, by giving them some new name. Here is a man who lives a very covetous life and squeezes a dollar until it cries in its agony; and he calls it 'thrift.' Here is a man who spends money—not that which he has earned himself, but which he has inherited from others—and he scatters on every side with a lavish hand and calls it 'generosity.' It is simple self-deception. Some years ago, the public was entertained by what were called *The Ravel Plays in Pantomime.* One scene took place in a gorgeous chamber, whose columns were of porphyry and marble and precious stones; whose floor was rich and beautiful; whose music was ravishing. The people drank and danced, in the richest of garments. Then suddenly, at the sound of a trumpet, all this was changed. Those beautiful columns became gravestones; the music became a wild and wicked shriek; the garments fell from the people, and the people appeared as ghosts or skeletons. Well, some day a trumpet will sound, and we shall appear just as we are; and our voices can no longer be disguised."[1]

[1]The Judson Press. Used by permission.

Morse has emphasized the importance of making our deeds harmonize with the purposes of God as revealed in his Word. We cannot be good stewards and be self-centered. Our recognition of God's claim upon us must be without hypocrisy.

We cannot make anything. Science says that matter can neither be made nor destroyed. We can only reshape, refine, or make combinations of that which is already available. We recognize then that the material which is already here is not ours. We only administer what is placed in our care. That is why we are called stewards for a steward is one who administers the affairs or property of another (Luke 16:1).

2. The Divine Owner—God

Read Psalm 24:1, Isaiah 45:12-13, 1 Corinthians 4:7, James 1:17.

We are reminded of the scripture,

"What have you that you did not receive?"

Every man is tempted by the thought that

"My power and the right of my hand have gotten me this wealth."

We are totally dependent upon God for all things. They belong to him by the indisputable right of creation. Riches and honor among men came from him.

When a man recognizes God's ownership he discovers that he dares not keep everything he has for his own use. He is under compulsion to devote a portion to God's work of transforming men who use material things into men of the spirit (Lev. 27:30-32).

Bishop Theodore S. Henderson once said, "The most sensitive spot in the surrender of the whole life to God is my property. Perhaps it is because my property provides me with material comforts, selfish satisfactions, and

gratifies personal tastes and appetites. It may be that my property represents so much of myself: so much of my toil, so much of my effort: so much of my time, so much of my strength: that it is in my very self. . . The question is, 'Who is owner, God or myself?' If God, then I must surrender all to him. Sometimes the conflict is severe and long. Always man has attempted to except his property from the surrender: but when I begin to condition my surrender, then I begin to compromise: and to compromise with God is fatal to my soul."[1]

3. The Divine Purpose—God's Kingdom

Read Genesis 1:28, Daniel 2:44, Matthew 25:34-36.

Possessions are not man's to be held or hoarded. They must be used in the service of the good-end. This is the true meaning of possessions. An automobile is not made for the garage. Its true purpose is transportation. A ship is not designed for the drydock. It is destined for the seven seas. Are our possessions to be used for ourselves alone or for others? Acceptance of the latter truth is not for the purpose of extracting money from people but is a means for developing Christian character and of making possible genuine fellowship with the Father-God. The great truths of the Bible are the bases for the conviction that our material possessions are a trust from God to be used in his service for the benefit of mankind.

The kingdom of Christ was set up in the world by the preaching of the gospel. The prophet described its coming as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands. It would be set up by no visible hand. Some would interpret this to mean that human hands have no part in it. Not so. Its origin is divine. Its power is superhuman. Christ, the sovereign monarch, rules by his word and spirit, but hu-

[1]From *Stewardship and Tithing*, by George F. Bradford. Copyright, The Bethany Press, St. Louis. Used by permission.

man hands must make material provision for the ongoing of the kingdom. It requires dedication of life, talent, time, and—money.

We want a Christlike world. We believe the church is the only instrument by which this may be accomplished. There are many forces in the world which challenge the church and threaten its very existence. The church cannot meet these issues except as it is given the tools with which to work. A better world cannot be made by wishful thinking. We believe Christ's word is final in things pertaining to the church and the activities of Christians. The necessity for stewardship roots deep in the gospel. Stewardship is the Christian method for promoting, supporting, and extending the kingdom. Consecrated money is like blood for the heart; air for the lungs. Someone has said, "Stewardship is a vital part of the Christian life; the Christian life is not fully expressed without stewardship."

Questions

1. What is the pagan idea of ownership?
2. What is the Christian idea of ownership?
3. Of the two, ignorance or selfishness, which is the greatest hindrance to the practice of Christian stewardship?
4. What would happen to an individual and to society as a whole if the principle of God's ownership of all things were denied?
5. Why did God give us the power to master his creation and to use it to our profit?

The instructor will be helped by reading chapter two, "God's Stewardship," in *The Message of Stewardship,* by Ralph Spalding Cushman.

2. God and Man's Possessions

"And now, Israel, what does the LORD *your God require of you, but to fear the* LORD *your God, and to walk in his ways, to love him, to serve the* LORD *your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the* LORD, *which I command you this day for your good? Behold, to the* LORD *your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it."*

—Deuteronomy 10:12-14

DAVID LIVINGSTONE said, "I will place no value on anything except it relates to the Kingdom of God."

Read Matthew 5:16; 6:33; 22:21; 25:31-46; 26:7-10, James 1:17-18, Isaiah 5:8.

Nearly fifty years ago a young man who owned a small retail lumber store dreamed that some day he would build a city of his own. Robert W. Grafton, the artist, put that dream into a painting. The young man is shown standing in the doorway of his store. In his eyes is portrayed a vision as he looks into the skies. In the clouds the artist has painted a modern city with towers and high buildings, homes, parks, and industries. The dreamer was R. A. Long who later became founder and president of one of the largest lumber companies in the world. His dream came true. That city is now called Longview, Washington, and has a population of many thousands. There are schools, libraries, homes, wide streets, beautiful parks, and no street cars. Longview is a significant name for this city because it was the dream of a man with a long view, one who had a far vision. He had the power to bring his dreams down from the skies to the earth. But what is more important, R. A. Long was a faithful Christian and a great steward.

Our God is a jealous God. This may give offense to some people, but these words are the statement of a profound fact. The Christian religion is the most jealous thing in the world. It demands only one place in the human heart, first place. It must either dominate a man's life and be the supreme controlling factor or it becomes powerless and useless. William Lyon Phelps once said, "Religion is never content with a weekly contribution, or a large occasional present, or a tribute of courtesy; religion demands the heart, the inmost citadel; and unless it has that, it wants nothing. Either religion is the most vital of all truths, or else it stands for silly superstition, and should not be allowed to annoy and harass conduct, any more than Napoleon permitted it to interfere with his purposes. He went as far as anyone has gone without religion, and he is perhaps more to be admired than those who wish to have it both ways, like a man who gives presents to his wife, and his heart to someone else."[1]

Man reaches his greatest creative height and expression of spiritual power when he is building for God. When we saw the beautiful cathedral in Cologne, Germany, we were told that this was the first great Gothic building to have been erected in this part of Europe. Its beginning dates back hundreds of years. Yet, there is still a scaffolding around a portion of the building which indicates that the cathedral is not finished. So it is with man's work and the building of God's Kingdom.

There are many simple chapels dotting our land like the little log church in the Jackson Hole country in Wyoming with the background of the beautiful Teton Mountains. All these structures are symbols of man's desire to build for God and to worship him. There is a definite relationship between man's physical building and his spiritual service.

[1]From *Human Nature in the Bible*, copyright by Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers. Used by permission.

1. The Physical Is Servant of the Spiritual

In John 1:14 we read,

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father."

Thus the flesh of a human being was caused to become the instrument of God's greatest service to mankind, the incarnation of his Son. The physical became the servant of the spiritual.

Paul wrote that we have the privilege of "working together with him" (2 Cor. 6:1). He meant that we were co-workers with God. We are the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit when we obey Christ and his gospel (Acts 2:38, Rom. 8:11, 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19, Gal. 4:6, 1 John 4:13). God works through us who are both physical and spiritual beings.

To some the Bible may be nothing more than a book of leather and paper and ink. But the Book is more than that. Its message is power. Its influence is spiritual.

Money is material. It is also congealed energy. Jesus continually emphasized the relationship of money to spiritual enterprises. Money is time and energy distilled for material and spiritual purposes. The spiritual is the most important.

It is too easy for man to depend upon the material and thus make it first in importance. Rabbi Moshe Leib said, "How easy it is for a poor man to depend upon God! What else has he to depend on? And how hard it is for a rich man to depend on God! All his possessions call out to him, 'Depend on us!'"

Our country is a land of gadgets, of creature comforts, of mass production, and of great scientific advance. The tragic misuse of God's good gifts has brought the United States to the place of peril. Possessions are a power when administered to the glory of God, but the cause of unrest

and spiritual bankruptcy when they become an end in themselves. It is reported that the American people are less generous than in former years. In 1951 charitable causes received about 2½ billion dollars. This was 3 per cent less than the amount given to the same charities during the worst of the depression period. While Americans were giving 2½ billions to good causes they were spending 22 billion dollars a year in gambling, 800 millions in sports pools, about 9 billion dollars for liquor, and 3.4 billions for tobacco.

The recognition of the principle that the physical has always been the servant of the spiritual leads man to see that he is responsible to God, the Creator of the material (Deut. 16:16-17; Rom. 14:12).

2. The Highest Glory of the Physical

An elder in a certain church was a great servant of Christ. He was the superintendent of a large Sunday school, he preached much, and he was a baker by trade. Once when he was traveling on a train a zealous lady passenger asked him bluntly, "Are you a Christian, sir?" He did not resent her question, and replied that he was. After she had thanked God for this she said to him, "What work are you doing for the Master?" "I bake," he replied. "I did not ask about your trade, but what service you give to him who redeemed you?" the woman asked again. "I bake, madam," he answered. She was nettled at this and urged again, "I mean how are you seeking to glorify Christ and spread his gospel?" Once again he answered simply, "I bake." This Christian baker's reply was sincere and went to the root of the true conception of stewardship. The common things of life when dedicated to Christ become holy, and daily service becomes a vehicle for the greatest expression of a life's devotion. This baker made his baking contribute to the spiritual purposes of God.

A building constructed for commercial purposes may be beautiful in its architecture and luxurious in its appointments. But compare such a building with one dedicated to changing men so that the world may be safe for commerce. A building put up for factory purposes may be magnificent in its appearance and in what it does. However, compare such a building with one used for the teaching of the gospel and the preaching of his message which would change men so they will give an honest day's labor. A building dedicated to the task of making the factory owner more interested in serving mankind than in reaping a profit is nearer to God's purposes than the factory.

To accomplish the goal of causing the physical to serve a spiritual purpose means that we must know God's mind so far as he has revealed himself to us (Deut. 10:12-13, Eph. 1:7-14; 3:1-3; John 3:8).

Furthermore, we must be stewards.

A little girl was having a wonderful time in the toy department of a large store. She saw the finest dolls, doll houses, dishes, and toy furniture. After a glorious afternoon she finally made her selection. Her choice was a tiny plush squirrel, when she might have received a variety of more lasting gifts. This is the disappointing story of many. Through the many opportunities we have in the church we are privileged to select the means which will result in Christlike characters and the privilege of working with him in the building of the Kingdom. Instead, we often choose the little squirrels of inadequate service and minimum stewardship. Henry Thoreau watched men as they were furiously driven by their madness to own things. Sadly he remarked that most men seem to live lives of "quiet desperation."

Long ago, a young man who worked in a candy factory was given his check as a share of the year's profits. He

was staggered by the amount. As he studied his check a feeling of tremendous responsibility for its use came over him. He had planned to celebrate the New Year's Eve with other young men but the size of this check caused him to change his course. Instead he went to a church service with his mother and there they knelt together in prayer. Later, this same young man, John S. Huyler, decided to devote his life and his substance to the service of God and humanity. He never swerved from that decision and he became one of America's greatest stewards. First he gave a tenth, then a fifth, and then a third. Then he moved up to 50 per cent, and later he took merely a reasonable provision for himself and gave the rest into God's service.

The Scriptures with which we began this chapter clearly point out that man's whole duty is to make the Kingdom of God his chief concern. Spiritual service is all important. The material is valuable in the truest sense when it serves the high purpose of bringing about spiritual ends—the salvation of mankind, the advancement of the Kingdom, the winning of the world for Christ.

Questions

1. Is there any relation between Old Testament sacrifices and the principle that the physical is the servant of the spiritual? (Gen. 8:20; 12:7-8.)

2. Why is the sole pursuit of material possessions fatal to men's moral and spiritual well-being?

3. Is it impossible for the very rich to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

4. If material possessions can become the cause of man's spiritual downfall, should we choose poverty as the best way of life?

5. Can you illustrate how the love of money corrupts the spiritual life?

3. Society and Man's Possessions

If I have withheld anything that the poor desired,
or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
or have eaten my morsel alone,
and the fatherless has not eaten of it; . . .
if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,
or a poor man without covering; . . .
if I have raised my hand against the fatherless,
because I saw help in the gate; . . .
this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges,
for I should have been false to God above.

—Job 31:16-17, 19, 21, 28.

A GOOD STEWARD will use his possessions in the interest of others. When one accepts Christian stewardship as a rule of life in all its implications he will be moved by an inner compulsion so to use his possessions.

The United Stewardship Council once defined stewardship as follows, "Christian stewardship is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities, and material possessions based on the conviction that these are a trust from God, to be used in his service for the benefit of all mankind."

John D. Rockefeller, Sr., who in his old age found pleasure in giving away dimes, might have devoted his millions to building monuments. But someone appealed to Mr. Rockefeller to use his money for the good of humanity through the establishment of a research institution in science and medicine. He gave $165,281,624 to the "acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in the prevention of suffering and in the promotion of any and all the elements of human progress." Such use of his fortune has resulted in blessings for mankind. This is good stewardship.

The selfish person rarely sees need anywhere except the urge to fulfill his own desires. He is like a man who is color blind—he sees only certain colors. He sees those things which pertain to his own happiness alone. The happiness and well-being of others are blind spots on the retina of his own mind. When he becomes a genuine steward his eyes are opened to opportunities all around for the expression of stewardship in meeting human situations. Needs to be met by our stewardship can be classified under two general terms which are familiar.

1. Physical Needs

Read Psalm 109:16, Proverbs 21:13, Ezekiel 34:4, Luke 10:25-37; 16:19-26, James 1:27; 2:14-16.

A good steward recognizes his responsibility for using his possessions in the right way no matter how insignificant the material or the need may be. One day Thomas Carlyle suddenly stopped at a street crossing, and stooping down picked up something out of the mud. He gently rubbed the mud from it and then holding it carefully as if it had been something of great value, he took it to the sidewalk and laid it down on a clean spot on the curbstone. "That," he said, "is only a crust of bread, yet I was taught by my mother never to waste anything, and above all, bread, more precious than gold. I am sure that the little sparrows, or a hungry dog, will get nourishment from this bit of bread."

From an early day, the Jewish people were taught to be concerned with the physical needs of their brethren. The misfortune of one became the concern of all. In the story of Job, the Sabeans and Chaldeans robbed him of his possessions. A storm took the lives of his children. In his more prosperous and happier days he had contributed generously to the care of widows and orphans and had clothed the needy and fed the hungry (Job

31:16-21, 31-32). When adversity overtook him his brethren and his acquaintances rallied to his side and supplied his wants. Every man gave him a piece of money and each one a ring of gold and restored him to prosperity. To this day, the followers of Judaism rally to the needs of any worthy Jew who has met financial reverses.

The story of Pitcairn Island is familiar to many. When Captain Pipon, of England, visited the island in 1813 he reported, "Each person considered that whatever he possessed was for the general good." This was the spirit of the early church as described in Acts. They were all of one heart and soul and no one claimed anything that belonged to him as his own

"but they had everything in common" (Acts 4:32).

A man who did not believe in heaven often argued with a preacher friend on this point. Finally the minister persuaded the skeptic to carry a supply of food to a particular family who were in desperate want. The man acted on the idea. In a few days the minister saw the man again and asked the critic as usual, "Do you believe in heaven?" The man's heart had been strangely warmed by the joy he had given. "Yes, sir," he replied, "I have been there." Heaven usually is found in the joy of sincere service to others.

Our biblical references at the beginning of this section clearly indicate how important it is in the eyes of God that man uses his possessions for others. No one made a more practical application of this teaching than did Jesus. Of all his parables there is none greater than that of "The Good Samaritan." The spirit of this parable finds expression in churches cooperating to build and to maintain homes for the care of the aged and little children. Benevolence when practiced in behalf of a single individual either as one shares his possessions with a

needy neighbor or as it is carried out in a larger way through benevolent agencies is an expression of Christian stewardship.

2. Spiritual Needs

The highest use of our money is found in making possible a ministry to the spiritual needs of humanity. This is clearly implied in Jesus' instructions to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. So our stewardship is necessary in order to carry out two major spiritual functions: teaching, preaching.

The church must be supplied with material tools and equipment. This makes the stewardship of money necessary. The church must teach stewardship to the family, because the family is the basic unit of human society. The life-changing ideas of our Christian faith must be implanted in the minds and souls of children so these ideas may come to fruition throughout life and thus cause individuals to experience a true partnership with God.

Preaching is also a divinely appointed task. By it the gospel is mediated to men's hearts and minds where it can produce the good fruit of Christian action. No one can deny the divine authority for preaching. Nevertheless, preaching must be undergirded by the stewardship of money. Spiritual needs are met through preaching, but preaching must be supported by material stewardship. Paul said,

> "Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches" (Gal. 6:6).

In Romans 10:15 Paul asks,

"And how can men preach unless they are sent?"

Preachers must be qualified for their spiritual task and also commissioned to preach. But there is more. A missionary may be commissioned to go to Africa but his com-

missioning is in vain if he is not also supplied with a steamer ticket. That calls for consecrated money. The preacher of the gospel must also have his expenses underwritten. A regular ministry must have regular support.

"The laborer deserves his wages" (Luke 10:7).

Many will remember Rex Beach's great novel *The Ne'er-do-well.* Kirk Anthony, the ne'er-do-well, was the son of a millionaire. Once when he was drunk his friends took him in his state of intoxication on board a ship just sailing for Panama. He arrived there to observe the Americans in the gigantic task of digging the Panama Canal. The ne'er-do-well saw men working in the huge man-made valley like so many ants. With the prodigious devices of skillful engineers they were shoveling away great mountains. The wonder of it all captivated Kirk's imagination. The ne'er-do-well could not escape this challenge of doing something worth while. Finally, it drove him to action and he sought employment. He was given a job and threw himself into the work. The result was the ne'er-do-well became one of the finest of men. This came from his having seen the challenge of a great task.

The Father-God, through Christ, has given into human hands an even greater task. It is to span oceans and bridge continents with the gospel of redeeming love. It must be done by human hands; it must be carried on through Christian stewardship. It calls for great amounts of consecrated money. Bridges, railroads, canals, airplanes, tall buildings, and all these material things benefit and bless mankind, but none of them can bless mankind as can the gospel. Without changed lives these materials of temporal nature are of little value for they are worth while only as they serve the deepest and greatest needs of humankind.

E. R. Moon, veteran missionary to Africa, has said it as follows in his poem:

VALUES

A dew-drenched morning, a million pearls;
Diamond-tipped leaves startled by birds
Drop their jewels on earth beneath, transmuted there—
New wealth, new beauty.
Spider webs, jewel-studed lace, sparkle in the morning light.

The sun climbs high the eastern sky;
The beauty fades, its glory gone.
O transitory world where values live but for an hour
Hast thou no permanent wealth to give?
Beauty faded, Glory gone—

But hold—within my soul that dewy morn still lives;
Diamonds and pearls, jewels rare,
No night so dark their glory dims.

Ah, my soul, is this the secret of true wealth?
The material fades, the spiritual lives.
Beauty in things is ever passing,
When wrought in soul, is everlasting.[1]

Questions

1. Should one do as he pleases with his money?
2. What is the most effective way to practice stewardship?
3. In Acts 4:32, 34-35, we read how the early church practiced the community of goods. Which is most significant: Their having all things in common or their distribution of goods according to the needs of their members?
4. Why do Christians hesitate to practice the stewardship of their property?
5. Are Americans in general becoming better stewards?

[1]Published by The Galleon Press, 1936. Used by permission of the author.

Part Two

Stewardship in the Old Testament

4. The Separated Portion

All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD'S; *it is holy to the* LORD. *If a man wishes to redeem any of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it. And all the tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the* LORD. *A man shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, neither shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it, then both it and that for which it is exchanged shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.*—Leviticus 27:30-33.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT thought that ever occupied my mind was that of my individual responsibility to God."—Daniel Webster.

When creation was completed and man had become a living soul God placed him in a garden with permission to eat the fruit of every tree except one (Gen. 2:16-17). God the creator reserved this one tree for himself, indicating that in the garden there was a definite portion which was sacred to him alone. It was there as a monument to God's portion. The Genesis record shows how ancient is the practice of the separated portion which continued through the patriarchal age and in turn became the national practice of the Jews.

The separated portion is a symbol of God's ownership of the world (Ps. 24:1). It shows also his ownership of the

souls of men (Ezek. 18:4). The socialist says that the earth and its resources belong to the people as a whole and not to individuals. Communism says everything belongs to the state. The capitalistic system is based on the private ownership of wealth, a right which is not unlimited. Above all these viewpoints is the ideal that the earth and its resources belong wholly to God. In this relationship man is steward and not owner.

All who have tried to look at the blazing sun if only for a single instant have found that its light is too strong for human eyes. When we take a smoked glass we can look upon the sun's bright light because the sun's rays have been translated into terms our eyes can grasp. Jesus Christ is the means by which God is translated into that which we may understand. He is the glass through which we see God. Stewardship is the language which makes clear to us God's ownership and to reveal our relationship to him. Stewardship serves as "wires" for God's love to flow through to bring his love to bear upon all human situations.

Nothing brings the great principles of stewardship to the level of man's understanding more clearly than the biblical teaching concerning the separated portion. The separated portion covered every area of life.

1. The First-Born Were Set Apart

Read Exodus 13:2; 34:19; Leviticus 27:26; Numbers 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:17; Nehemiah 10:36.

The act of setting aside the first-born was a part of the process of educating a people. It is clearly seen that the separated portion was a law of the Hebrews which was designed to make it necessary for every Jew to continually acknowledge God's ownership. The law of the first-born emphasizes his creation, in which God is acknowledged as the source of all life. To perpetuate

this teaching, the first-born of each family was presented to God in the rite of the redemption of the first-born. It was a memorial to the time when the first-born of Israel were redeemed from the angel of death in Egypt. This is the reason Jesus was taken by Joseph and Mary at the age of eight days to be presented in the temple (Luke 2:22-24). As Christians we are always reminded that we too have been redeemed through Jesus Christ. God spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all. We are not stewards simply because God made us but because he redeemed us.

"You were bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20).

2. First Fruits Were Set Apart

Read Exodus 22:29; Leviticus 2:12; Numbers 18:12; Deuteronomy 18:4, 26:2; Nehemiah 10:35; Proverbs 3:9; Romans 11:16; 1 Corinthians 15:20; James 1:18.

The law of the first fruits refers to the divine ownership of all wealth. The first and best of the ripe wheat and other crops, as well as the products of the vineyard, were to be brought to the priests at once to avoid the temptation to use them for themselves. Delays in this matter could lead to later denials and refusals. The Hebrews were to bring even the first fruits of their conquests (Josh. 6:16-24). This great ideal later even applied to the first fruits of the grave as it was written of Jesus after his resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20). The main qualification for the acceptability of the first fruits was that they were to be "without blemish" (Exod. 12:5; Lev. 22:17-25).

In order that the fertility of the soil might not be lost and the first fruits finally lost also, there was a law of the sabbath rest for the land (Lev. 25:1-7). This was further enforced in the law of redemption which was designed to prevent land from going into the hands of

large land owners. Every fifty years the land reverted to the original families. Thus land could not be sold in perpetuity. When the year of jubilee came the land automatically went back to descendants of those who had been originally settled on the land (Lev. 25:23-41).

3. A Family Set Apart

Read Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 29:44-45.

The first family to carry out the purposes of God in the manner of the "separated portion" was the family of Abraham. Later Aaron and his family were set apart for sacred and holy service. As the worship of the Jews became more elaborate it had to be organized and someone was needed to look after the arrangements. It was true then as now that what was everybody's business was nobody's business. Thus, instructions were given to dedicate Aaron and his family to serve and to administer all the worship and sacrifices in the tabernacle. This development of the Hebrew religious life later resulted in the consecration of one tribe to religious service.

4. A Tribe Set Apart

Read Numbers 1:47-50; 8:14.

The tribe thus separated in Israel was the Levites. They were appointed to the task of ministering in the tabernacle and later in the temple. They were not to till the soil because their living was to come from the tithes (Lev. 2:3; 10:13; 27:21; Num. 3:48; 5:9; Deut. 18:3; 2 Kings 12:16).

This was the precedent for Paul's argument in support of ministerial maintenance as set forth in his first letter to Corinth. Those who ministered at the altar divided the sacrifices with the altar and those who worked in the temple got their living from the temple. No soldier on duty ever paid his expenses out of his own pocket.

Those who sow spiritual seed have the right to expect material benefits from those among whom the spiritual seed was sown. There is no stronger argument for a paid ministry (1 Cor. 9:3-14).

Read Numbers 35:7.

Out of the land possessions of the tribes forty-eight cities were assigned to the Levites. This act made possible the blessings which would come from having Levites in the midst of each tribe. Furthermore, it was one more evidence of God's ownership and reminded the Hebrews that they were indebted to God for their personal estates. Cities given to the Levites were looked upon as having been given to the LORD.

Read Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-15; 58:13-14.

In this study we are mainly concerned about the stewardship of money. However, there is more to stewardship than money. Time is surely involved. Time is related to money. God set apart one day to indicate his ownership of time and to provide time for worship. Man shall not live by bread alone.

5. The Tithe Was Set Apart

Read Leviticus 27:30.

Certainly, the subject of the tithe belongs in a discussion of the separated portion. The principle of the tithe goes back to a time earlier than the law. In Leviticus we read, "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy to the LORD." The tithe, whether it be from the fruit of the field or the increase of the flock or in money, honors God because it places God's portion first. We will deal with the tithe more in detail in later chapters.

In the church today the teaching of the way of life as it is in Christ is a most significant work, the preaching of

the gospel is necessary for the saving of souls, and the work of ministering to broken bodies and clouded minds on foreign fields is a definite commandment. All these things are encompassed in the great commission. The person who recognizes God as owner and who honors him with his "separated portion" expresses the divine spirit and mind. These God-given powers direct the person's life as the officer in the conning tower directs a submarine. The divine indwelling comes when the circuit is completed by a person's act in entering upon the right relation with God. Without this the great commission would be powerless.

Jacob Prins said, "Ordinarily we ask only one question instead of two when we think in terms of our possessions. We ask: 'What will my possessions do for me?' The deeper, more pertinent, question is: 'What are my possessions doing to me?' Do I control them or do they dominate and control me? Material possessions can do things for us. They can also do great things to us! Much depends upon whether or not we are willing and ready to place these possessions in the hands of the Lord for him to use when and where and as he will."

This is the separated portion.

Questions

1. Are there any present-day political views which seem to hold to the biblical teaching on ownership and management of property?

2. Why should the "first fruits" be without blemish?

3. Why should God insist on the first-born and the first fruits for himself?

4. How is regular public worship related to stewardship?

5. How should one consider his stewardship of time in the light of the doctrine of the separated portion?

5. Worship and Stewardship

Moses said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "This is the thing which the LORD *has commanded. Take from among you an offering to the* LORD; *whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the* LORD'S *offering" . . .*

Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him, and every one whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD'S *offering to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. So they came, both men and women; all who were of a willing heart brought . . . all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the* LORD.—Exodus 35:4-5, 20-22.

HUMAN LOVE is one of the finest elements in life. How is human love expressed? Is the mere fact of love enough? Is love itself the only token of love? The lover shows his affection by deeds and by gifts. He gives flowers, sweets, and finally a valuable ring. The gifts are material symbols of a spiritual fact—love.

When God made man he gave him the power to return his love in holy affection. A newborn babe always reaches out its tiny hands towards its mother for nourishment even within an hour of its birth. A carrier pigeon, taken many miles from its home and released, will return as straight as an arrow guided by some invisible force. These inner urges are but poor reflections of the higher urge in man expressed by Augustine when he said, "We came forth from God and we shall be homesick until we return to him."

Man is religious because he cannot be otherwise. God has stamped his being upon man's being. So the psalmist says,

"As a hart longs for flowing streams,
so longs my soul for thee, O God" (Ps. 42:1).

Worship is the means by which we have fellowship with God. But meditation and prayer are not enough. Worship has always brought forth from man his choicest gifts. Into God's temple he has brought his noblest art and to religion he has dedicated his finest literature.

When the Japanese spy hunt was on in Rangoon, Burma, during World War II, anyone with a book was under suspicion. Christians hid their hymnbooks, prayer books, and Bibles. A Japanese soldier found a New Testament in the house of a certain Christian. "What's this?" he asked. The Christian replied, "That is my Bible, my life. Where I go it must go with me, and without it I should die." The soldier left the Book! This regard of the Christian for his Bible is the reflection of a spiritual hunger satisfied only in spiritual worship. Man needs God.

Worship found early expression when man began to bring the corn of the field and the fruit of his vineyards and the best of his flock to be dedicated to God. These gifts were tokens to acknowledge God's ownership and man's dependence upon him. Material offerings were a specific acknowledgment of man's relationship to his creator.

Once when I crossed the Atlantic, the ship ran into a heavy storm. The vessel plunged and rolled heavily. I had no anxiety for the safety of the ship because I knew it was built for stormy weather as well as calm and that its gyrocompass would keep us on our course. Hour by hour, in spite of the heavy seas, we forged onward. Worship is the spiritual gyrocompass which keeps us on our

spiritual and moral course. Through it we build up inner resources which make it possible for us to be strong regardless of what storms of life beat against us. We have the security which comes from the One who is back of the tides and the seasons.

Since worship is a necessity to man there must be some means by which to express it in addition to prayer. True, Jesus said worship must be in spirit and in truth. Not once did he deny the importance of food and clothing and material things to man and to God. He recognized the place of offerings in worship. He commended the widow who gave all she had.

God commanded man to bring a definite and a fixed portion of his produce and of his money to him as an act of worship. Man has the right to hold and to use material things but he must never forget that God is the owner. He brings the required portion into his worship as a symbol of that recognition. Would God give instruction in how to worship him acceptably and fail to define the offerings which signify his ownership?

In Exodus, chapters 35 and 36, we have the account of the building of the first tabernacle for worship under Moses. The people were told to bring their offerings of gold, silver, brass, and many other kinds of material as free gifts for the house of worship. The response of the people is an example of acceptable stewardship and of the proper attitude in worship. The people gave willingly (35:29b). Their gifts were brought every morning so there was a regularity about their response (36:3). It was so great and so liberal the word was brought to Moses that

> " 'The people bring much more than enough for doing the work which the LORD has commanded us to do.' So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, 'Let neither man nor woman do anything

more for the offering for the sanctuary.' So the people were restrained from bringing" (36:5-6).

Giving which is acceptable to God in worship must be free and from a willing spirit, it must be regular, and it must be liberal. These same instructions are carried over into the New Testament (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-3, 12; 9:7).

Since God is owner and man is steward, man's offerings become an experience in fellowship. He fixed the extent or the amount of the offerings which were to be brought to him in worship. God required a seventh of time and a tenth of increase. Harvey Reeves Calkins, in his book, *A Man and His Money,* points out that there is no reason for the law of the seventh and the tenth except divine revelation. These laws are based upon the authority of God himself who made his will known with respect to tithes and offerings and acceptable worship.

1. Tithes a Debt to God

Read Leviticus 27:30, 32, 34; 2 Chronicles 31:5; Malachi 3:8-12.

When Hezekiah became king of Judah (727-697 B.C.) the kingdom was depressed and disorganized. Judah was deeply in debt to Assyria to whom they owed tribute. To correct the situation Hezekiah broke down the idols of Ahaz and restored the worship of God in a reopened and cleansed temple. He revived the former order of worship with the priests and Levites and ordered the people to begin paying their tithes as a debt to God according to the law. The success of the temple service depended upon the people.

Good stewardship requires that the steward keep accurate accounts of all increases made possible by God's gifts of soil, air, sunshine, and vital energy. When the steward is aware of the true source of these increases he

is conscious of his debt toward him who gave us life and who sustains our lives by his love and care.

If we fail in our just obligations to God, to that extent God fails. Paul said,

> "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

His work among men is done through his people. We have a debt to pay and we pay it in part by financing God's kingdom enterprises.

It is said that Theodore Roosevelt had a favorite phrase which he used with young men. It was, "Pull your own weight in the boat!" Of course, this saying was based upon college boat races where young men gave their best as in other sports to win over the opponent. It is said that when one of them would break an oar or lose an oar lock so that he could not pull his stroke he would jump overboard. This would relieve his racing shell of his own dead weight. In life it is given to everyone to pull his own weight in the spirit of the Scripture which says that every man must bear his own burden. Everyone has an individual obligation to God. No one else can fulfill it for him. In this matter he must "Pull his own weight in the boat."

2. Offerings Were Given to God

Read Numbers 15:3; 1 Chronicles 29:9; 2 Chronicles 29:31, 31:5-10; Ezra 8:28; Psalms 116:17; 119:108.

Above the requirements of the law the Hebrews gave gifts to God. Before David's death he called upon the people to give liberally toward the building and furnishing of the temple which his son Solomon was to build. David himself had given his own gold and silver to this cause. There were other calls upon the people's generosity. They first paid their tithes and then they made their gifts.

Their offerings were given in order that God's house might be constructed, maintained, and furnished. These gifts above their tithes were not given as alms which was another matter. The Scriptures always clearly distinguish between what is given to God and what is for charity. Alms-giving was separate from tithes and offerings (Lev. 25:35; Matt. 6:1, 3; Luke 11:41).

When the psalmist prayed,

"Accept my offerings of praise, O LORD"

he was offering his purse as well as his worship in prayer and praise. His money was offered along with the spiritual offerings which all are obligated to give freely to God (Rom. 12:1-2). Man has sinned through the ages in his refusal to pay his just debt to God and to give offerings. More than that he has sinned in his failure to give himself.

Tithes and offerings were important in the ritual of worship. The people were enjoined to enter into God's courts and to bring offerings. God expected and commanded that gifts and offerings should be brought when men came to worship him;

"None shall appear before me empty handed" (Exod. 23:15-17; Deut. 16:16-17).

God was not thinking of his need of gifts but of man's need of sharing for the development of the grateful spirit and to make man more aware of him.

Students of the life of Abraham Lincoln report a very curious fact about his immortal "Gettysburg Address." It is said that in all the known notes of this address which were written before the actual day of its delivery, the phase "under God" does not appear. When Lincoln stood on that battlefield he somehow must have felt the presence of God. He extemporized to the extent he included in the sentence, "that this nation, *under God,* shall have a new birth of freedom." This phrase does

appear in the reporters' copies which were taken down in shorthand while he spoke. Under the stress of this great experience he became keenly aware of the eternal. Stewardship does that as a regular thing. The daily practice of stewardship is not something done under pressure but it, too, always keeps before the steward his relationship to God. It makes him keenly sensitive to spiritual realities. It helps him to know that he, too, is under God as a steward and as a co-worker.

Once a minister and a building contractor stood gazing into the depths of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. The minister said, "It is glorious, isn't it? Surely it is the handiwork of God." The building contractor thought in terms of earth-moving machinery and soil excavation and the like and he said, "What a deep hole." There is nothing to indicate that the builder disbelieved the statement of the minister. He simply lived in another world altogether. This is one of the chief obstacles confronting the development of the Christian way of life. There are many people who do not altogether disbelieve nor do they present arguments against Christianity. They merely live in their own world. The question comes to everyone, "In what world do you live?" Do the Christian ideals of life intrude or control? Stewardship is a way of life. It is not an argument for Christianity. It is the expression of it.

Questions

1. Why must man worship?
2. What is God's purpose in the law of the tithe?
3. Is giving optional?
4. How is giving related to worship?
5. Is worship properly observed which does not include giving?

6. The Danger of Avarice

Take heed lest you forget the LORD *your God, by not keeping his commandments and his statutes, which I command you this day; lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the* LORD *your God. . . . Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the* LORD *your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth."*—Deuteronomy 8:11-14, 17-18.

THERE IS A story of a curious experience which happened many years ago to a whaling captain of New Bedford when cruising off the coast of China. It was a hot and sultry afternoon and the ship lay almost motionless in the glassy sea many miles from port. The captain stood by the wheel more asleep than awake as elsewhere on the ship the sailors nodded and dozed. Suddenly he was aware of three thistle seeds which drifted quietly past his face. As he began to doze again he was disturbed by the thought of those three thistles. How could they have traveled so far out to sea and not fallen into the water? All at once they became tiny danger signals and he was startled wide awake. He shouted to the crew to take in every bit of canvass at top speed. Within twenty minutes the ship was in the midst of one of the terrible typhoons common to those waters. The thistle seeds, swept far from land in advance of the terrific wind, had brought warning to the captain just in time.

To all of us there are given warning signals of impending spiritual danger. They may be the incidental acts of selfishness which only predict the later storms of avarice and covetousness. The Scriptures are filled with instructions and reproof in order that man might succeed in reaching his highest spiritual possibilities. In a study of stewardship it is well to give attention to some of these danger signals as they affect this area of living.

1. Selfishness Condemned

Any kind of selfishness was condemned in the Old Testament. For example, there were those who hoarded foodstuffs. The wise author of Proverbs wrote,

> "The people curse him who holds back grain,
> but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it" (11:26).

Those who expressed their selfishness in greed for land were also condemned. Isaiah said,

> "Woe to those who join house to house,
> who add field to field,
> until there is no more room,
> and you are made to dwell alone
> in the midst of the land!" (5:8).

Read Joshua 7:21; Proverbs 15:27; Habakkuk 2:9.

Covetousness brings the curse of God upon man and that which man gains by fraud brings ruin. Also, as of any other sin, the innocent are caused to suffer for the sins of those guilty of covetousness.

This truth is illustrated in the story of Achan found in the seventh chapter of Joshua. The children of Israel were defeated in the battle of Ai because of Achan's greed. When Achan was confronted with his crime he confessed to the sin of covetousness and became his own accuser. In this incident is seen the deceitfulness of sin. It was pleasing in the act but bitter in the consequences. The

temptation appeared as harmless as a dove but the doing had the bite of a serpent. Ill-gotten goods obtained to satisfy covetousness, or that which belongs to God retained in one's own hand in selfishness not only robs God but also cheats the sinner.

Habakkuk's prophecy belongs to the period between 625 and 606 B.C., early in the reign of Jehoiakim. The Babylonians were sweeping westward but had not yet reached Judah.

The king of Babylon in his pride thought he had beaten all the surrounding nations so severely none could make reprisals. But he was unaware of God who held him accountable for the thousands of lives he had sacrificed and for having laid waste the lands of Israel. He had wrought violence and destruction but woe is pronounced against him for his covetousness, the sin underlying all his actions. He had an insatiable desire for wealth and honor. He grasped at abundance for his own house; for his own family. His punishment was because of his avarice and his lust for power which indicates God's attitude toward covetousness. Avarice was the root-sin which bore the awful fruit of bloodshed and carnage.

2. Why Covetousness Is Sin

Why were covetousness and avarice regarded as spiritual foes and condemned as sin? Why do they seem to be so deadly? The Old Testament is filled with references to God's condemnation of these sins. The seriousness with which they were regarded is seen in 2 Kings 5:15-27, the story of the greed of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha. Gehazi's sin was complicated in its action. At the root of it was his love for money. He blamed his master for not having accepted Naaman's present of gold when he might have had it, he envied Naaman for his wealth, and he lied to Naaman about the two sons of the prophet.

He also lied to Elisha. He lied not once but twice since one lie usually begets another. This story reveals the truth that the way of sin is downhill. One sin always has other sins in its company for, like the legion of devils which had taken over the unfortunate one whom Jesus healed, the sin of covetousness does not walk alone.

Covetousness is a sin for a number of reasons.

1) Covetousness puts man before God. It is the wrong order. God comes first. His kingdom should have first place as Jesus said. This order is the old sin of the Garden of Eden, the sin of self-centeredness, and pride. It is self-worship. Man is first and God is last (Ps. 10:3, Ezek. 28:1-5).

2) Covetousness violates the law of God's ownership because:

a) It disregards God's property rights as creator. As owner he expects his share of the increase (Mal. 3:8). He has a right to expect the best (Mal. 1:8). He has the right to expect of us the best of our sons in his service, our lands to bring forth increase in his kingdom, and our money to be used to extend his way of life among all people.

b) It is the wrong use of God's property. An automobile is made for transportation over streets and highways. Any attempt to make it serve as a boat to cross a lake or river would result in disaster and would be a foolish misuse of property. God gave us the earth and its fruits in order to bless us. They were to be used in the building of character fit for his fellowship. Covetousness puts property to work to serve selfish purposes. It misdirects possessions. Covetousness takes property out of general circulation.

c) It fails to bring proper returns (Ezek. 34:1-16). In this passage God reminds the leaders of Israel that they have been under-shepherds accountable to him. He charges them with the desire to enrich themselves and to make

themselves great. In their selfishness they took no regard for those who were in their care. They called themselves shepherds but they were not. God's flock was scattered and made captives in Babylon.

3) Covetousness violates the rights of others (Exod. 20:17). This commandment strikes at the root of appetites and desires which are the sources of other sins (see also Rom. 7:7). It forbids doing injury to others through covetousness.

4) The fruits of covetousness are evil. They are:

a) Oppression (Gen. 31:41). Laban was a hard taskmaster and unreasonable. His desire for gain led him to rob Jacob. He would have sent him away empty handed.

b) Disobedience (1 Sam. 15:9). Samuel, in God's name, required Saul to be obedient to the commandments of God. But Saul failed to obey his instructions completely. Probably in the hope of a ransom Saul spared Agag whom he was to destroy. He also spared the best of the cattle which he reserved for his own fields and his own table.

c) Stealing (Josh. 7:21, 1 Kings 20:6). Avarice sometimes leads to the appropriation of other people's property by fraud or theft.

d) Unscrupulousness (1 Kings 21:1-16). Ahab's avarice led him to commit a brutal crime against Naboth. Ahab, a despicable and covetous character, was slain in war with Syria.

e) Hypocrisy (Ezek. 33:31).

The unrepentant Jews who remained in Jerusalem after its fall (586 B.C.) pretended to be religious. When the prophet's back was turned they mocked him (Isa. 29:13-14). When he spoke God's word they listened patiently and with a show of reverence. Their love for God was a sham and pretension. In their hearts they were as much

set upon covetousness as ever. Their minds were on their merchandise. Covetousness makes a show of religion while secretly it chokes the love of God out of the heart.

George Grey Bernard, an American sculptor, some years ago created a statue representing two men in a desperate struggle. One bent over the fallen form of the other in a life and death battle. Drops of sweat are shown on their foreheads and their muscles stand out like whipcords. The symbolism of the statue is revealed in the words from Victor Hugo which were chiseled on the bronze base, "Behold, I feel two natures struggling within me."

Good and evil are always contending in each of us for the mastery. Paul said,

> "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells in me" (Rom. 7:19-20).

All of us are moved by conflicting passions and impulses. The seeds of covetousness exist within everyone like the germs of disease which we always carry in our mouths and throats and in our bodies and which wait for the moment of opportunity to spring forth and to cut us down. Covetousness, also, waits only for a moment of weakness to produce in us acts of greed and avarice. Even the good urge for self-preservation can grow into self-aggrandizement.

3. Right Attitudes Toward Possessions

Nowhere in the Bible are possessions of the right sort condemned. Shelter, food, and clothing are a part of normal living. These physical needs are clearly recognized. Evil results when the desire for possessions gets out of bounds.

The Old Testament clearly insists that man's ability to get wealth is a gift from God (Deut. 8:18). As these words were spoken, the Israelities were in the wilderness. Israel is reminded that God will bring her into a good land and will bless her. Israel is to beware lest the people forget this and when prosperity is on every hand and their flocks and herds have multiplied they turn away from God. A prosperous man or nation stands in danger of becoming indifferent to the origin of his wealth. Then he is inclined to the sin of covetousness. Having much he wants more. There is nothing evil in prosperity. Evil results when prosperity is the goal of life. Someone has pointed out that one's body temperature when raised only a few degrees brings peril to life. When one's ambition to acquire the necessary things of life becomes his ruling passion a good ally has become a dangerous enemy. When men forget that God gave them the ability to get wealth the next step is to rob God of his own (Mal. 3:8-10).

For further study: 1 Samuel 8:3; Proverbs 1:13, 19; Isaiah 56:11; Zecharias 9:3.

Questions

1. Can a nation, as well as individuals, be guilty of avarice?
2. Why is the sin of covetousness so deadly?
3. Why is it a folly to heap together unused wealth?
4. Is there any relation between the sin of pride and the sin of avarice? (Prov. 16:19.)
5. How prevalent is covetousness among people you know?
6. What sins follow covetousness?

Part Three

Stewardship Teachings of Jesus

7. Talents, Time, and Material Possessions

He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.—Luke 16:10-13.

IT IS AN inescapable fact in Christian stewardship that how I get what I give is equally if not more important than how I give what I get. All the good giving cannot make up for the bad getting. Stewardship begins with me—not with what I have first, but with what I am. The stewardship of what I have can only rightly follow the stewardship of myself."[1]—Mark A. Dawber.

What money does for and to a person was very important to Jesus who was always aware of the individual and his needs. The Christian message exalts the importance of the individual (John 3:16; 1:12-13). Richard L. Ownbey reminds us of the healing of the Gadarene

[1]From *Stewardship Facts, 1956.*

lunatic (Matt. 8:28-34) to suggest that Jesus was more concerned in returning a man to sanity than he was in saving a herd of swine. The people, however, were more interested in the value of their herd than they were in the worth of the individual who had been healed. One of the most important phases of stewardship is what practicing it does to the steward himself. Money is also important for what it does to the one possessing it. Ownbey in his book *A Christian and His Money,* in the chapter on "The Christian Management of Money," points out that it is pure paganism to invest money with no concern for what it may do to or for persons. The Christian steward is one who will insist that his investments will enrich lives and not destroy them.

The good steward is a growing individual. He is concerned about his stewardship since it is a means of his spiritual development. Jesus' awareness of this was the reason he gave stewardship a major place in his preaching (Luke 16:10-15). Here the Master indicates that stewardship is a growing experience. We demonstrate our ability to enjoy and to administer the true riches if we are faithful in our use of the "unrighteous mammon," money. We have often heard it said that one must learn to obey before he can give orders to others. Jesus points out that one must be faithful in the administration of another's property before he can receive that which is intended to be his own.

Jesus points out another fact of Christian stewardship which is that where one's treasure is there is his heart also (Matt. 6:19-21). Stewardship is an index to Christian character. Knowing this our Lord speaks frequently about money, property, business practices, and inheritances. It is clear that Jesus desired that his disciples give more attention to laying up treasures in heaven than treasures on earth. It is not true that one must be a

millionaire on earth to be a multimillionaire in heaven. No one, poor man or rich man, is excused from stewardship responsibility in the light of the teachings of Jesus.

Stewardship is opportunity. Fred Zimmerman said, "Never for one minute believe that the church asks for your time and your money and your talents simply because it needs these things. The church asks for your time, talents, and possessions, because this is the heart of the Christian witness. If you are truly a Christian you will recognize these requests as opportunities, for you will know first of all and last of all this one thing: that God's love is your only joy, his forgiveness your only hope, his righteousness your only confidence."[1]

Stewardship is also a measure of one's love for Christ and his church. There are those shortsighted, selfish church members who give as little as possible of service and money. Ralph E. Valentine points out that such people live by the law of diminishing returns. The stewardship life is living by the law of increasing spiritual dividends, he says. The account in Luke 12:13-21 teaches this truth in a powerful fashion.

1. The Stewardship of Talents

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

This is a parable of work and business. The master in the parable is God who is presented as absolute owner of all persons and things. Christians are his servants and belong to him. This parable once again lays down the basic principle of stewardship that man is not the owner of his possessions but merely the administrator on behalf of the true owner. Everything man has is given to him by the Owner. In the parable there was a trust committed to the servants. The master delivered to them his goods so that no one would be idle.

[1]From *Stewardship Facts, 1950.*

The talents we have are not our own but are given to us that we might be profitable to Christ. No one is without at least one talent. Some have more and some have less, but all have equal responsibility. It will be noted in the parable that the returns were in proportion to what each had received. Therefore, it is clearly seen that God expects his stewards to increase in accordance with what he has given them. He who has received plentifully will reap plentifully. The unfaithful servant who buried his one talent was not guilty of misspending, misuse, or squandering. He was merely guilty of doing nothing. This is one of the great sins of Christendom. There are many people who are good, but good for nothing. No one is without opportunity to serve God. There are many who are guilty of laziness. They have one talent to care for but are too indolent to cultivate even the one. There are those who have five talents who also may be unfaithful. Their guilt is increased over the one-talent man because of their neglect of five-talent opportunity. This parable states that the servants had to give an accounting of their stewardship. They were required to produce as evidence of their faithfulness that which they had gained. Jesus would have no one avoid the teaching that there is to be the time of reckoning (Matt. 12:36; 18:23; Luke 12:48).

A person is responsible to God for his talents since they are God-given. Spurgeon said that individuals do not all have the same talents because God is a lover of variety. Money is self-propagating. Money breeds money. Individual talents are the same. The parable shows that the man who had two talents increased them by two more. The man with five talents was also able to multiply his original possessions. But the man with one talent was blind to his opportunity and responsibility. He dug a hole and buried his talent. Jesus was concerned that each person should make use of his capabilities to their full capacity.

Individuals have a growing capacity. They also have growing opportunities. This is true of the spiritual life. Throughout our country there are "Toastmaster's Clubs." In these organizations individuals are taught to take what talents they have for public speaking and to increase them through practice. Teaching a Sunday school class or addressing a group also provide opportunities for growth. Thus we use our talents. But some develop their various abilities and then through neglect drift back to their former ways. The law of use and disuse is well known. Disuse results in loss of capacity and opportunity.

There was once a bright young Indian girl who came to a mission school. She quickly learned the rules of sanitation, good housekeeping, and the ways of the Christian life. She completed her high school training and went to an advanced Indian school. Then she returned to the reservation where she married an Indian who had not had her training. Soon she drifted back into the old ways of the tribe, the old ways of the "blanket" Indians. In speech and action she became as those who had had none of her advantages. In a few brief years there remained no sign of her college attainments. Her later condition is an illustration of the tragedy of neglect of one's talents.

2. The Stewardship of Time

Read Matthew 25:1-13.

Roswell C. Long in *Stewardship Parables of Jesus* reminds us that time is the greatest capital we have for the building of the Kingdom of God, and it is borrowed capital. This parable does not describe hypocrites, or the godless, but those who are negligent in prayer, the easy-chair addict, the disciple who is slothful in the work of the

church, the neglectful of regular worship, and the manufacturer of excuses for failure to attend to God's business. The good steward will make the best possible use of his time.

The excuses for not attending church, for living unfruitful lives, or for failure to witness for Christ are great in number but few in general pattern. Most of them stem from the sin of indifference or the failure on the part of the disciple to put Christ and his kingdom first. "Our child had a cold"—so father, mother, sister, and brother all stay home from Sunday school and church. "We can't get all our little children ready for Sunday school," says the mother of five. But a Sunday picnic finds them all dressed and ready on time to be off in the family car with a huge basket of food. "I haven't time to teach a class," but every Sunday during the hunting season this "disciple" is early in the hills. God knows, and we admit it when we are honest with ourselves, that a person can do that which he wants to do. He will do those things which are important to him. Jesus preached to the end that his followers would consider his cause more important than picnics, houses, or lands, or even families (Matt. 10:37; Luke 9:57-62). He believed it so much he died for it.

He who has been neglectful of time and has failed to create spiritual reserves through the practices of prayer, regular worship, and the other opportunities provided through the gospel and by the church, will find himself poor indeed. He has no spiritual "money" in the bank upon which to draw when the "rainy day" comes upon him. Money lost may be recovered. Dollars which have been misspent can be earned again to be used more wisely. But time is different. Once wasted it can never be recovered. Time lost can never be found again. Time is God's free gift of capital which must be used at once. The

wise steward plans his day, his week, or his years in the light of his responsibility to God, the giver of time (Matt. 24:38-39, 48-51; Luke 12:20, 37).

3. The Stewardship of Money

Read Matthew 22:17-22.

Jesus knew the hold money has on life and that accumulating it was the personal goal of many. Money stands in the way of the good life when it comes between man and God.

Modern life is built upon money as the basis of our economic system. When a person thinks of the things he would like to have he must think in terms of money. When a family desires a new home they must think in terms of the money cost of the house and lot and furnishings. A farmer desiring to trade his farm for his neighbor's must have in mind the money value of both farms. The man who owns timber does not take a load of logs into town to trade for groceries or a new automobile but first translates them into money. Money is a blessing when it serves man but it is a curse when it becomes the chief goal of society. Therefore, the emphasis with which Jesus talked about money.

The Master recognized that it was the duty of his followers to render to the country that which was due according to law. The community, the state, and the nation were entitled to a just proportion of public wealth. However, he made it clear that we must remember to render to God the things that are his due. God first asks for our hearts, then for his share of our time, and finally for his portion of our purses. God must have his share as well as Caesar.

The Christian is always faced with the possibility of two dangers: forgetting God in times of prosperity and putting possessions first in life (Deut. 8:11-20; Luke

12:13-14.) Jesus emphasized the fact that a man's life does not consist in the acquisition of possessions. It is no disgrace to be rich if the wealth has been acquired properly. The danger lies in leaving God out of one's life and in failing to realize the relation of the individual to his creator. The person who has made wealth the sole purpose of his life dies unprepared for the life to come. He was no friend of God on earth. How can he expect to be at home with God? Jesus considered a man a fool who laid up treasures for himself and was not rich toward God (Luke 12:20).

Robert C. Mould, of Lansing, Kansas, tells of being with a group of World War II GI's on a visit to the little village of Barbizon on the way from Paris to Fontainebleau. At the village outskirts the guide pointed out to them the spot from which the great artist Millet had painted "The Angelus." As they stood there with the sun sinking in the west it was easy to imagine the peasant couple as they bowed in prayer while the bell from the church steeple rang in the distance. "You see," said the guide, "you are getting the viewpoint of the master." That is the most important thing in all of life—the viewpoint of the master. The successful Christian steward has acquired the viewpoint of the Master.

Questions

1. Is it possible to be a Christian and not a steward?
2. Does the parable of the talents apply only to Christians or to all people?
3. Can the five-talent man misuse his talents and be as guilty of wrongdoing as the man who buried his?
4. What happens when a man's chief ambition in life is the making of money?
5. How is stewardship an index to Christian character?

8. The Motives for Stewardship

Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.—Matthew 6:1-4.

MANY CHURCH PEOPLE do not understand that there is a basic difference between the church and other social institutions, such as the country club, the county fair or the cooperative creamery. In such institutions the major financial obligations may be only on the horizontal plane—that is, between people and people. In the church, however, the major financial obligations are definitely on the vertical plane—that is, between people and God.

"Of course, in the church there are also horizontal obligations, but they are not the primary ones. We do not take up a 'collection' to get enough money to pay the preacher, the janitor and the organist; rather, we give people the opportunity to make an 'offering' by means of which they show God how much they really do love him and how grateful they actually are for his offered mercies. The by-product of such stewardly giving is always adequate financial support of the kind of program the church ought to have."[1]—David Davids.

[1]From *Stewardship Facts, 1950.*

All human action is based upon motives. Some actions are motivated by the primary human demands for such physical requirements as food, clothing, and shelter. The soldier who sacrifices his life on the battlefield to save his comrades may be motivated by love for them, by patriotism or by hate for the enemy. The purpose of this chapter is to consider the motives for stewardship and to present the high standards of Jesus.

There are three major motives for stewardship.

1. Law and Commandment

Read Exodus 19:5; Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 3:13; Deuteronomy 14:22; 26:2; Matthew 6:33.

These familiar passages remind us that stewardship is commanded as a way of life in man's relation to God and to Christ's kingdom. It is ordained for man's good. Traffic laws are established for the same reason. They make the highways and streets safer for both automobile driver and pedestrian. Traffic laws restrict man's actions and direct him on his way. They are benevolent commandments. Stewardship commandments are given for man's development and to make it possible for God to give his approval and his blessing.

We are stewards because stewardship is God's will for us. We do not give our money because he is poor, or our time because he is limited by it as we are, or our talents because he lacks for servants. We are stewards because we have been given the privilege of partnership with God. Stewardship is our part of the partnership arrangement. Furthermore, stewardship is a necessity to save us from the sins of selfishness and covetousness.

2. Gratitude

Read Deuteronomy 8:10; 1 Chronicles 16:8; Psalms 50:14; 104; 107:21-22; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17.

God created the universe for man. When he made the world he gave man dominion over it. Into all his creation he put his own divine nature. He set the seasons, winter and summer, seed time and harvest. He made his planet a predictable world and placed it in a predictable universe. Scientists can foretell the changing tides, the sweep of comets across the sky, or the exact second of an eclipse. God gave us a trustworthy, law-abiding universe. He designed the world so it would sustain man, and he established laws whereby man would be provided with daily provisions (Matt. 6:25-32; Luke 12:29).

Man should be grateful for:

a) A controlled, dependable universe which operates by means of God's spiritual laws. It is, for the most part, a friendly world when man abides by these laws which are beneficent in nature.

b) Our bodies, so marvelously constructed that man stands in amazement before their design.

c) Our lives and for the God-given ability to think his thoughts after him. He has made us to be a little lower than the angels. He has placed us in a world which is remarkably suited for man's health and well-being (Gen. 2:7; Ps. 104:30; Acts 17:25).

d) God's greatest gift to the world—Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 9:15).

e) The church, the unique fellowship set up by Christ himself. It has resisted the forces which would have destroyed it (Matt. 16:18).

f) Eternal life (John 3:36; 17:3).

Gratitude is a spirit which can be cultivated. The writer once knew a piano tuner who had been blind from birth. He lived across the city from us and to get to our house it was necessary for him to walk some distance from his own home and board a streetcar for downtown. There in

the midst of heavy traffic at a busy intersection he would transfer to a cross-town car. Depending upon some amazing, uncanny knowledge he would make the change without assistance. When he got off at the corner nearest our home it was necessary for him to walk two city blocks, cross a railroad track and then make his way over some unfinished streets. He would always arrive at our home on time and unscathed. He had so cultivated his sense of feeling and direction he could instantly recognize the way a streetcar was going and could also thus direct his own course. If a blind man could develop such a sense of direction, surely it is possible for those with all faculties intact to cultivate the spirit of gratitude which brightens life and pleases God.

We are stewards because of gratitude.

"You received without pay," said Jesus, "give without pay" (Matt. 10:8).

3. Love

Read Matthew 5:20, 46-48.

Love is the highest motive for stewardship. Love was given by Jesus as his highest revelation. We are no longer bound by law for love is a higher law.

"For the love of Christ controls us" (2 Cor. 5:14a). Jesus demonstrated his love in his consuming compassion for all people and their needs. He did not perform the miracles of healing to vindicate his teachings or to give evidence of his divinity but because his compassion and love for man compelled him to do everything within his power to meet their needs and problems.

Love is the fulfillment of the law for it requires that we do more than the law.

"Make love your aim,"

said Paul (1 Cor. 14:1). Our most effective stewardship is not based on law or argument but upon love. Man did

not love God because of law. It was God's love that won man's love. We love God because he first loved us. No youth ever won the love of his bride by argument. God did not win us in that manner either.

It is love that transforms character. During the dark days of the Civil War when the Northern cause seemed irretrievably lost, a boy from New York lost his courage and deserted. He was captured, court-martialed, and sentenced to death. In fear and despair he appealed to President Lincoln. He promised that if Lincoln would pardon him he would return to his cavalry regiment and serve until the end of the war. Lincoln wrote the boy a note which is now preserved in Washington. He said, "On condition that Roswell McIntyre of the Sixth Regiment of the New York Cavalry returns to his post and faithfully serves out his term, making up for lost time, he is hereby fully pardoned for any supposed desertion heretofore committed, and this paper is his pass to go to his regiment. Signed.—A. Lincoln."

This kindness and love were powerful enough to transform the boy's character. The last cavalry action of the war was at Five Forks, Virginia, in 1865. After the battle a New York soldier was found dead on the field with this letter of forgiveness in his possession. Roswell McIntyre had kept his promise. He had responded with courage and had died bravely because of love which had been shown him. It was the law which had condemned him to be shot. It was love which made a hero out of him.

The stewardship teachings of Jesus are all designed to be personal. His appeal is always to the individual and not on behalf of an institution. It is his desire that man shall triumph over his possessions. He wants man to be the master of his time, talents, and money. He warns against permitting money to become the master and man the slave. Jesus said,

"No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Jesus came to establish a righteousness which would exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. Before he makes this claim he insists that he had not come to abolish the law and the prophets. He came to fulfill them (Matt. 5:17). Jesus would have his listeners understand that the kingdom he came to set up would not be prejudiced against the old Scriptures which they honored as coming from God. Jesus was to command nothing which was forbidden either by the law of nature or the moral law. He came not to repeal the law but to amend it.

He gave a higher law which is based upon and established by the truths of the old law. He declared that there is danger in the neglect and contempt of the old law (Matt. 5:19), but our reasons for obedience and for Christian stewardship are based upon the freedom which is ours in Christ and motivated by love. The Pharisees acted according to law. Christians act according to love.

In Matthew 12:43-45 Jesus explains that the heart of a believer has been cleansed and is now made ready for his presence. However, in the parable the cleansed person's affections and desires have not been centered upon the Christian life. The vain and evil things of the past have been swept away. Love, meekness and the fruits of the spirit have not taken their place in the house. So, the demon returns with seven other deadly spirits and the man's last stage is worse than the first. This makes clear that believers in Christ must surrender fully to his love. They must fill up their lives with Christian action. Christian stewardship does this for the individual.

For twenty-five years Dr. and Mrs. Douglas S. Corpron served as missionaries in Hofei, China. During that period the Corprons trained doctors and nurses which resulted in a completely staffed and well-equipped hospital, the only

institution of its kind to serve a population of more than a million people. Three times they were driven out by wars and three times they lost all their possessions. Early in their missionary career they were compelled to take up temporary residence in the Philippine Islands and there they lost two children by tropical disease. During one of Dr. Corpron's furloughs home, he addressed a civic group on China and his work there. In his audience was a large number of doctors and surgeons. When they were told the amount of a missionary's salary and heard the story of Dr. and Mrs. Corpron's accomplishments in China they were amazed. One doctor was overheard to say he could not understand why Dr. Corpron would bury himself in China. But this was no mystery to Dr. Corpron or to the churches which supported the family in their overseas work. Christian love is the answer. Only Christian love is powerful enough to cause one to give his life in such sacrificial service.

Christian love is more powerful than law. Love makes the stewardship of life a privilege and saves it from becoming a burden. Love is the reason for stewardship.

Questions

1. When giving is based upon any other motive than love for Christ and gratitude toward God, is it Christian?
2. Can we call stewardship Jesus' philosophy of life?
3. Does the statement in Romans 5:8 throw any light on why we are moved by love to acts of stewardship?
4. How is our stewardship a measure of our love?
5. Are there other ways to show one's love for Christ and to practice good stewardship than through the giving of money?

9. Stewardship and the Great Commission

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."—Matthew 28:18-20.

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation."—Mark 16:15.

Those who have accepted Jesus Christ and his way of life are held by two far-reaching convictions out of which come an understanding of the necessity for stewardship. The first is that the Christian believes in and hopes for a world under the control of God in which all human relations and human concepts are based upon the teachings of Jesus. The church is the only agency which can bring to pass this ideal of Christ. Today there are great hosts of people yet unevangelized.

Another Christian conviction is that Christ's word is a final and a sufficient authority for faith and practice. Freely we have drawn upon the Scriptures for the great doctrines of the church, the truth about man and sin, the way of forgiveness and the hope of eternal life, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Lord's Day. Unfortunately, we have until recently left stewardship out on the margin of necessary teaching. Jesus, as a good steward, fulfilled the purpose of the Father in sending Him into the world. Many of his followers accepted his authority over every area of their lives. If Jesus and his followers had not been stewards we would never have had the church (Matt. 7:29; 28:18; Mark 1:27; John 5:20-27).

The church is not the only movement in the world today with the goal of world conquest. We have seen the recent rise and fall of Fascism, with its last strongholds now in Spain and South America. Communism, with its passion to reconstruct the world upon the basis of Marx's philosophy, is still making conquests. The only way to meet these movements and to defeat these ideologies is through Christians who have an absolute loyalty to God and to the teachings of his Son. Therefore, stewardship assumes a position of critical importance. The church is the instrument for the accomplishment of Christ's goal of the whole world for his kingdom.

When the first World War, called "the war to end all war," ended, it left millions of dead upon the battlefields. Men began to believe that science and technology had made war too devastating to start one again. The world was thrilled with the hope that mass bloodshed was banished forever. To insure this hope the League of Nations was organized. There were solemnly signed pacts and treaties, designed to solve all international problems. Diplomats told the world that mankind would become one great brotherhood and that we were at last being ushered into the glorious golden age.

Then came a solemn warning first uttered by Archbishop Soederblom of Sweden. He warned the disillusioned world that utter disaster would come "if they hoped to build a new and better world with the same old men." He called upon Christian leaders to bring the world to a realization that a new world can come only through new individuals. He challenged them in a prophetic announcement that if Christianity fails, the world will fail.

Then in a few years, in spite of all human efforts, to prevent it, the world found itself in the convulsions of the bloodiest and most cruel of all conflicts, the second World War. In five years about 34 million men and women and

children were killed and 66 million people had their lives and hopes ruined.

Will it be that 25 million Communists will win the world while 600 million Christians will lose it? The Communists act with passion and fanatic zeal. Christianity cannot win the world with Christians who have only a lukewarm, legal attachment to Christ, and dependence upon ritual and ceremony with no urgent desire to share Christ and his gospel. The church must go into all the world with the only message that will save it. For the church to do this a thoroughgoing stewardship on the part of every Christian is required.

Kenneth M. Glazier, in a "Men and Missions" leaflet published in 1948, reported that one day he stood chatting with a small group of students in International House, New York. Each student was from a different country. As they talked, a young American asked a cultured girl from Burma about the religion of the majority of the Burmese. She replied that it was Buddhism. The young man said, quite casually, "Oh, well, that doesn't matter; all religions are the same, anyway." The Burmese girl looked directly at the young man, Dr. Glazier reports, and said, "If you had lived in my country you would not say that. I have seen what centuries of superstition, fear, and indifference to social problems have done for my people. We need the truth and uplift of Christianity. When I became a Christian it cost me something. If your religion had cost you more, you might be more aware of its superiority. My country needs Christ."

Ross J. Griffeth, president of Northwest Christian College, Eugene, Oregon, pointed out in a convention address that each citizen is required to pay heavily to bear the cost of war. For example, during the Korean struggle the United States government was spending one bil-

lion dollars a month for war, or $80 per person in the United States. Dr. Griffeth challenged his audience to imagine what could have been done if Christians had been willing to invest that amount in programs of good will. Perspective seems to differ when money is required of one and when one is giving voluntarily.

1. The Gospel Is Universal

a) Its universality was predicted in the Old Testament. Psalm 2:8; 22:27; Isaiah 2:2; 9:7; 11:9; Daniel 2:44-45.

b) The gospel is to be preached throughout the world. Matthew 24:14; 28:19; Mark 13:10; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8.

The relationship of stewardship to missions and the necessity for missions are emphasized in a most logical and indisputable fashion in Paul's letter to the church at Rome as recorded in Romans 10:14-17.

2. The World Mission Makes Three Requirements

a) The whole church must be committed to the task. This commitment is based upon a recognition of the authority of Jesus Christ as head of the church and as its Lord, and a realization of our personal debt to him and to others. Like Paul, we are debtors to many, including the servants of Christ who from the past have handed on his faith to us as a great heritage. We are committed because of our love for Christ, and because we understand the spiritual fact that the only way we can save our faith for ourselves is to share it with others.

b) The church must give its youth to the task. It is reported that in Africa there is one missionary to 80,000 people. In Korea, before the war, there were 120,000 people to one missionary. In Japan there is one missionary for every 170,000 Japanese, and in India one to every 320,000 people. Before China was hidden behind an iron curtain they had one missionary for every 470,000. Three-quarters of the people in South America and two-thirds of

India's population are yet unevangelized. Young people quickly respond to this great challenge and offer their lives. Their going depends upon a more adequate stewardship of money.

c) Our money must be given to the task. In the parable of the last judgment (Matt. 25:31-46), which some have called the service test of our Christian faith, Jesus indicates that every individual will be brought face to face with the record of his stewardship. The universality of the gospel is equaled by the universal nature of the judgment.

In this parable Jesus makes the decision on the ground of Christian service to one's fellowmen. It is clear that God will judge the world by the same rule by which he governs it, and therefore will reward those who have been obedient to his will. Love, which is the second great commandment, is the fulfilling of the law. We give proof of this by our readiness to do good and to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of others.

In Luke 16:9-12, it is recorded that Jesus said we were to make friends for ourselves by means of unrighteous mammon—money. When it fails these friends will receive us into the eternal habitations. Who are these friends? They can only be God and his Son Jesus. No others would have power to receive us into our eternal home. Jesus said,

> "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much . . . If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches?"

Our entrance into eternal life is based upon what we do with our lives here. Our stewardship plays a vital part in the whole matter. Therefore, Jesus makes stewardship or that which we do with our money, our lives, and his gospel essential to salvation.

Jesus gave indirect approval to tithing although in his teachings there are only two references to it. They are in Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42. Here Jesus condemns the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, their social sins, and for laying stress upon trifles to the neglect of weighty matters of the law. He approved their tithing. Jesus said that he came not to destroy the old law but to fulfill it. In every instance where he in some way or another emphasized truth as given in the Old Testament he applied it to individuals and revised it upward. Therefore, the early church did more than tithe. They dedicated their all to the world task of the church (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37).

The program of Jesus involves money, and this money must come from his followers. Without money we cannot carry out his commandment to go into all the world. Ralph S. Cushman in *The Message of Stewardship* reminds us that God has made the advancement of his cause and the salvation of the world dependent upon money. Then "Why does not God miraculously turn the mountains into gold?" Cushman asked. However, this is not God's way. His plan is that material possessions should be placed in the hands of stewards and by means of their faithful stewardship his program is to be advanced. If the world were to be converted by miracle it would no doubt have been done generations ago. Christ always emphasized the importance of the individual and the necessity for personal growth (Matt. 5:48; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:13). It seems necessary for the individual to be saved through his own faith and obedience; his own stewardship of time, talent, and possessions.

If the gospel is to be preached to the world man must preach it. Preachers can only go as they are sent. This calls for the dollars which are in the pockets of church members.

Some will reply to the call of stewardship by saying that they are in debt for houses and lands, to the tax collector, or the groceryman and that a Christian should be honest and pay his bills first. We agree—a Christian must be honest. Therefore, he must not, he dare not, embezzle God's money—money which has been placed in his hands as a trust fund. He must not spend God's money on himself. There is no finer safeguard against this selfishness and our possible failure in stewardship than first to set aside a portion of our income. We recommend the tithe as the basic minimum.

In the great commission as given in Matthew, Jesus said, "—teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." It is clear that Christians dare not minimize or modify his instruction to take the gospel to the entire world. Therefore, Christian stewardship is an absolute necessity. Stewardship is not a debatable course of action for the sincere follower of Christ.

Questions

1. What can we do in the church to match the world's endeavors in science, technology, politics, economics, and education?
2. What can we do to awaken Christians to their responsibility for the spiritual and moral rebirth of the nation and the world?
3. Will Christian stewardship play any part in deciding the destiny of individuals, of our nation, and the world?
4. When should a steward start preparing for the day of "reckoning with the Lord"?
5. If the world is to be won through Christ, why cannot we do it through prayer alone?

Part Four

Stewardship Teachings of the Apostles

10. Man's Accountability to God

He also said to his disciples, "There was a rich man who had a steward, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'"—Luke 16:1-2.

In the Old Testament the foundation for stewardship is God's ownership by right of creation. The apostles gave still another basis for stewardship. Since in the Old Testament we are God's by right of his creation, in the New Testament we are God's by right of his new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

Man is the slave of sin (John 8:34). He cannot pay the price of his own redemption. No man is able to wash out the sins of the past. No one man is able to redeem other men, since he cannot even redeem himself. A watch at the pawnbroker, cannot redeem itself; it is under bondage to the pawnbroker. Only someone else can redeem the watch. So it is in man's case. Only one sent from God, a divine person, can redeem man. For this reason Jesus came as the son of man as well as the Son of God. He is related to God as his Son—he is related to man through the flesh. God's Son through his death on the cross atoned for the common guilt of all. To rescue man from sin the cost was great. Therefore, we have been "bought" with a great price (Matt. 20:28).

1. We Are Not Our Own

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 7:23.

Paul is here arguing against the common sins of Corinth which involved the shameful use of the body. The body is not for fornication, but for the service of Christ, the Lord. Christ is Lord of the body so we must be careful to not use as our own that which belongs to another.

"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?"

Paul asks. If therefore we have been joined to Christ we are no longer our own. Our entire person and personality are involved. We must look upon ourselves as holy to the Lord and dedicated to the service of God. This view of God's ownership through Christ broadens the scope of Christian stewardship.

Since we are not our own, we have become God's spiritual temples (2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:5).

2. We Are Spiritual Debtors

Read 2 Corinthians 8:9; 1 John 3:16.

We pay our spiritual debt by material means. Dr. Norman M. Keith, a diagnostician with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, recently retired, told the writer that Dr. Will Mayo developed this world-famous institution upon the principle of service. He said Dr. Mayo frequently told the staff that the people made it possible for them to build their institution. Therefore they were under obligation to the people to return to them through service what the people had made possible. The Mayos and their co-workers had a sense of obligation from their realization that they were indebted to others. This was an obligation of people to people. Our obligation is to

God, who is spirit. It is not possible to give evidence of our realization that we are spiritual debtors except as we practice the stewardship of all life.

3. Our Lives Are a Trust

Our lives are to be regarded as our stewardship (1 Tim. 6:17-19; Heb. 13:16). As Jesus was faithful, we are expected to be faithful (Heb. 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:2). Paul saw all of our earthly life in relation to the judgment to come. We are not absolutely certain just what Paul means by urging Christians to lay up for themselves "a good foundation for the future" but probably he is referring to that time when every Christian must stand before God and give account to him of the deeds done in the flesh.

Paul taught that Christians are members of a Christian brotherhood which is born of God's great redemptive act. This brotherhood is composed of those who are new creatures in Christ to whom God has given his holy spirit. Therefore, we are to be held accountable for what we do with these redeemed lives and also with the enterprise of winning the world for Christ. This program of Christian activity must have an adequate basis for support which is nothing short of the dedication of our whole lives to the task.

4. Partnership With God

Read Acts 2:42; 2 Corinthians 6:1.

In the reference from Acts we read that the new Christians following the day of Pentecost

> "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship."

The word fellowship implies much more than mere social associations. It indicates that in the early church they entered upon a partnership with each other and with God

in the Lord's work. This partnership called for the setting aside of funds in the spirit of reverence and devotion. This sacred fellowship held an equal place with the apostles' teachings, the communion, and prayer.

5. Administrators for God

We are to administer all that pertains to the person (talents, time, and money) in the interest of God's kingdom. We are reminded of the words of Jesus in John 15:8 when he said,

> "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples."

a) Our talents (2 Tim. 1:6). Fritz Kreisler, the great violinist, was once ill for many months as a result of a major automobile accident. Finally he was well enough to appear in concert in Carnegie Hall, New York. An anxious and expectant audience filled the place to the doors. Many thought Kreisler should not attempt to play and others were convinced the concert would only reflect how much he had lost in skill. When Mr. Kreisler began the audience relaxed. It was clear he still retained his old genius. It was after this concert Mr. Kreisler made the declaration that his renewed power to play the violin was not his own. He was no more than the agent through whom God was bringing music to people. Kreisler felt that the profits of his genius did not belong to him but to God and thus gave evidence of a sense of the stewardship of life. His talent was regarded as a trust.

b) Our income. Paul wrote to Timothy that

> "The love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim. 6:10).

In this letter as in others, Paul warns Christians against the dangers involved in false attitudes toward money. Evil ultimately finds its roots in soil much deeper than the

love of money. It is rooted in the sin of pride and in man's disobedience. It is in man's rebellion against God and in his refusal to make God the center of his life. Money is not the root of evil. However, the love of money is the root of many evil deeds.

Money is stored up human energy. The Christian will release this energy to the building of the kingdom of God. A Christian will be keenly alive to the need for dedicated wealth in the support of the work of the church in the world.

6. Our Responsibility for Others

a) Education. We are responsible for the Christian education of our children through our homes, our church schools, and our church colleges. It is a part of our stewardship to see that the facilities for education are available to all. It is the responsibility of the church to train its children for future service in the church. Christian education is a stewardship responsibility (1 Tim. 4:11-16).

Many church colleges are helping to train Negro workers to help the Negro to help himself. Other institutions are striving to meet the needs of the southern mountaineers. Colleges and seminaries for the training of ministers, missionaries, and other Christian workers are found throughout the land. There is still much to be done to undergird these schools and colleges adequately with financial resources.

b) Benevolence. The apostle Paul took up collections for the needy saints. The church responded magnificently (Acts 11:29-30). Paul charged the church to be ready to distribute to the needs of others. This calls for an active sympathy (1 John 3:17). Both John and Paul impressed upon the church the necessity to care for the brother in need.

c) Missions. Paul was a man with a missionary passion. An unevangelized territory was a challenge to him. He was truly the apostle to the Gentiles. He said,

> "For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. . . . I am entrusted with a commission" (1 Cor. 9:16-17).

The same necessity is laid upon the church today. Thus, we go into all the world with the gospel of Christ.

Following the day of Pentecost, Christianity became world minded. It had moved from the family and tribe among the patriarchs, to the Jewish nation. Under the Christian dispensation it became interracial, international, and world-wide. The objective is to bring the Kingdom of God to all nations, peoples, tribes, and tongues, and to bring about the universal reign of Christ. This program demanded an enlarged idea of stewardship, a vision which was immediately caught by the first Christians at Jerusalem. They began to give greatly in excess of the tithe.

God who moves upon the hearts of his people through his spirit, through Christ and the apostles' writings calls upon the church to support his work in the world today. It is this God and Christ who send men to the mission fields.

d) They who preach.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:3-14; 1 Timothy 5:17-18.

In what Paul had to say about stewardship he did not leave out the necessity for the support of those who preach the gospel. He laid down the principle that they should live of the gospel. Paul established churches all over the Roman Empire. He desired that they become self-sustaining from the very beginning. In his effort to lead these churches to support their ministers, Paul argued for the right of the man who preaches the gospel to live of the gospel. In Romans 15:26-27 he states the principle that it is proper for the Gentiles to express to the Jewish Christians their appreciation for the spiritual

ministry they have received as a result of the gifts of the Jewish Christians. In 1 Corinthians 9:11 Paul asks,

"If we have sown spiritual good among you, it is too much if we reap your material benefits?"

Paul is saying that those who give themselves to a spiritual ministry have the right to receive a ministry of material things in return. Therefore, the church is responsible for the financial support of its ministry.

e) Evangelism. The chief task of the church is evangelism, whether it is carried on by the weekly ministry of Christian education, from the pulpit, or by special efforts. It calls for the stewardship of time by those who are willing to share Christ with people outside the church. It requires the giving of money to maintain the preaching and teaching ministry of the church. The chief program of the church is evangelism, and it calls for the undergirding of a strong stewardship of money and time.

The apostle Paul thought of giving as a fruit of the spirit of God (2 Cor. 8:1-15). The growth of the grace of giving in the life of the church is one of the fruits of God's holy spirit. He speaks of it as a gracious work.

Questions

1. Are offerings properly a part of our worship service?
2. When Paul said all offerings taken in the churches should be spent in an honorable fashion in the sight of the Lord, what did he mean? (2 Cor. 8:20-21.)
3. In which is it the most difficult to giving an accounting of stewardship: time, talent, or money? Why?
4. Can Christian stewardship be interpreted as giving "A . . . sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1)?
5. What is Paul teaching about stewardship when he writes that the Macedonian Christians first gave themselves to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5)?

11. Proportionate Giving

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."— Matt. 9:35-38.

JESUS PICTURES the work of the church in a variety of ways, and here he compares it to harvesting grain. There is much to be done. Multitudes need instruction. Jesus saw them ready to respond to his gospel if there were enough workers. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the harvest, but that fact is not sufficient. The harvest will be lost if there are not enough reapers to do the reaping or enough of those who will make it possible for others to reap for them (Rom. 10:14-15). We put it bluntly. Christians must provide the manpower and the money power for the kingdom. Once again the imperative of Christian stewardship is recognized.

1. A Spiritual Harvest Is Promised

Read Mark 4:29; Luke 10:2; John 4:35-36; Galatians 6:9.

Life is God's field and men are his harvest. The good seed of the gospel sown by faithful ministers will spring up. Eventually Christ will gather in the harvest like wheat into a barn. He will reward his "harvesters" with eternal life. This is a hopeful picture.

2. The Apostles and the Early Church

Read Acts 2:1-42; 8:4-8, 14; 10:1-48.

Paul and others established churches in such cities as Antioch, Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, and Rome. The apostles then taught this process to others and urged the necessity for an active stewardship of the gospel (1 Pet. 4:10; Gal. 6:8). They insisted that all who became disciples were to regard whatever gifts they had and whatever means were theirs in the manner of "good stewards of God's varied grace." Whatever gifts the Christians have must be used in service for one another. The gospel was theirs to own and to share.

When Count Zinnzendorf, the great missionary leader and Christian steward, was on a ship with a group of Moravian missionaries approaching the West Indies, he asked them, "What will you do on landing if you find that all your brethren who came here months ago to work among the slaves have perished?" They immediately replied, "We will take their places." This represents the attitude of those who take seriously the importance of sowing and reaping on behalf of God's Kingdom.

3. Christian Stewardship Is Essential

In the cities where Paul established churches incomes were derived from trades, shipping, manufacturing, salaries, and other results of commerce. Paul applied the stewardship standard to those who received weekly or monthly incomes. He did not change the principle but he changed the method. In his letters the phrase "as he may prosper" appears for the first time. Also, in writing to these churches he gave the characteristics of a Christian steward (Rom. 12:6-8).

Paul charges the rich to use their money for the good of others and to be rich in good deeds. Every Christian, whether rich or poor, must seek to do good as he passes

through this life. This is so important Paul links it to the hope of the future life (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

Christian stewardship always begins and ends in evangelism which is the process of extending the kingdom at home and abroad (John 14:23; 1 John 4:19).

4. The Apostles Taught Proportionate Giving

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-8.

What is proportionate giving? Julian E. Stuart says, "Proportionate giving means the giving of a definite part of one's income to the work of the Lord. This means that the portion which is decided upon as being a Christian share, should be set apart before any other use is made of the income."

The instructions Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 were similar to those he gave to the churches of Galatia. It was his desire that all the churches should follow the same rules of Christian stewardship. It was not his purpose that one should have their burdens eased and another increased (2 Cor. 8:13). Churches which exceeded others in spiritual and material wealth would be burdened equally with those of their less fortunate sister churches since they were instructed to give proportionately; that is, as they were prospered.

Paul sets forth the good example of the churches of Macedonia and acquaints the Corinthians with the liberality of these churches who gave abundantly out of their poverty. He recognizes that their impulse to give came as a gift from God himself. They first gave themselves to the Lord and then gave beyond their ordinary means as a result of the grace of God. Paul argues that the example of the churches in Macedonia should constrain us to do likewise. However, the example of our Lord Jesus Christ should have even a much greater influence (2 Cor. 8:8-9).

It is clear that the apostles considered proportionate giving a minimum obligation laid upon every Christian. Harvey Reeves Calkins relates that once he was conducting a series of stewardship meetings in rural churches. By means of charts he attempted to show how the work of the church should be financed and its influence greatly strengthened through the practice of the proper stewardship of life and money. In one rural church, there was little response. Finally a farmer pointed at one of the charts and said, "They's a ketch in it." He said shrewdly, "I can see, if we adopt that plan, we'll be paying out more money than we intend to give." That was true, but the man had failed to recognize the obligation of stewardship. Plans and schemes will get money in certain amounts for a time. Christian stewardship aims first at getting the man and then at placing him under the power of a high obligation.

5. What Does Proportionate Giving Require?

a) A recognition of the authority of the New Testament. It is the only source of authority for the way one becomes a Christian and for the rules of church conduct. The New Testament has authority concerning our stewardship. The same Christ who gave the great commission to the church also gave instruction in stewardship. The apostles gave instruction to the church concerning stewardship of money on a proportionate basis.

b) The dedication of a definite portion of one's income to Christ and his church. God gives us life in definite portions of time; sixty seconds to the minute, sixty minutes to the hour, and twenty-four hours to the day. He expects us to use certain definite portions of this time in his definite service. So also he gives us all that we possess; he is giver of every gift. He therefore expects us to return a definite portion of all he gives us into the work of his kingdom.

c) This portion must be set aside regularly. Paul directed that offerings be brought into the church each Lord's Day. Where this method is used the work prospers if the giving is also on the proportionate basis. Weekly giving is in keeping with the weekly needs of the church. Furthermore, if stewardship is a part of worship, offerings can well be given as frequently as the worship services of the church take place.

Paul insisted on weekly offerings to avoid a high-pressure campaign later;

> "so that contributions need not be made when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2b).

This is a good policy for today. Churches which depend upon spasmodic, frantic campaigns to finance the church always seem to have deficits. Furthermore, such tactics hurt the work. Paul's method was psychologically and spiritually sound.

d) It is to be done in a cheerful spirit. Our motives for proportionate giving are gratitude, love, and loyalty. We are grateful to God for what he has done for us through Christ, we love him because he first loved us, and we show our gratitude and love through loyalty to his kingdom and to Christ's commandment to take his gospel into all the world beginning with our home town. Therefore, Paul points out,

> "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

6. The Results of Proportionate Giving

With Paul there was no doubt of this. He thinks of it in terms of reaping in proportion to our sowing. In 2 Corinthians 9:6 he points out that

> "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

Paul has no doubt about the good results of our sowing, some of which are:

a) The personal satisfaction which comes to the proportionate giver.

b) God's love and blessings are the portion of the proportionate giver. Paul assures the Corinthians that

> "God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

c) The church and its world-wide program is supported.

In the first centuries the church followed the example of the New Testament church in stewardship. About A.D. 200 Clement of Alexandria urged the church in Alexandria not to become attached to worldly goods but to make the right use of them. He taught the church that they were not owners but stewards.

The early church continued the support of benevolence as it was initiated by the first generation of Christians. About A.D. 250 a plague began which lasted for twenty years killing multitudes and reducing the population of Alexandria by half. Other thousands were killed by wars. These disasters had an immediate effect upon the church and resulted in the Christians providing relief. Cyprian raised a sum of money and sent it to various churches which had suffered from raiding enemies and ordered that the money be used for ransom. He was also very prompt to organize assistance for the churches striken by the plague. He instituted a nursing staff and a burial fund and instructed Christians to minister to all religions or none without distinction. Today a program of proportionate giving will provide large resources for the relief of many needy areas of life.

Under the emergency of a great crisis man is frequently seen at his best. Then he acts under the sway of his most

noble motives. When at prayer a man is also at his best. Again, a man who tills the soil and who recognizes his relationship to the lord of the harvest, who considers himself a co-worker with God in bringing forth fruits from the ground is a man at his best. Man is also at his best when, moved by a high sense of stewardship, he gives a proportionate amount of his time, his talents, and his income to the greatest work on earth.

Suggestion:

Make a personal and private chart of your own giving to the church and its enterprises. Chart should show income, giving on church pledges and for all special calls and special days of the church, and the proportion of his giving.

Questions

1. What would some of the inevitable and immediate consequences in our present civilization be if every Christian took seriously Christ's plea as recorded in Matthew 9:38?
2. What would happen if every Christian actually became a proportionate giver?
3. What should one do about his Christian stewardship if he is living beyond his income?
4. How should one go about deciding the amount of his proportionate giving?
5. Is it more difficult to practice Christian stewardship in poverty or in the midst of wealth?

12. Tithing—An Approved Principle

We want you to know, brethren, about the grace of God which has been shown in the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. . . . Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in you love for us—see that you excel in this gracious work also.—2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

SOME TIME AGO *Time* magazine became interested in the habits and possessions of their men readers. A survey was made, the results of which were published. They discovered that a "typical *Time* reading man" spent seven and one-half minutes a day shaving and used a statistical 78.8 strokes. He had about $30.50 in his pocket. He carried six keys all of which were used but one. The fascinating item of *Time's* discovery was that a man has a sixth key unused. It is a common experience to find on one's key ring a key the purpose for which one has forgotten. Can this discovery suggest that the church has a sixth key which is stewardship? Stewardship is a practice of many Christians but there are many more who would put stewardship in the category of the unused key. The stewardship key will unlock material resources and spiritual power for the church.

It is impossible to separate life and money for it is not possible to separate life and labor. The chief value of money is the amount of life for which it stands. It represents skill, intelligence, character, and toil—all the factors that go into honest work. The workman may hold his wages in his hand and say, "This is a part of my life. It represents spent energy. It is a part of me."

The leaders of the New Testament church were realists. They knew the relationship between money and life. They knew that money was power. They knew that it was necessary for the advancement of the Kingdom. In the establishment of the churches they did not neglect the doctrine of Christian stewardship and they did not deny the Old Testament basis for it.

1. The Tithe Is an Ancient Principle

Centuries before the time of Abraham it was almost universally recognized that a portion of all property belonged to the rulers or to the center of religious authority. Assyrian and Egyptian clay tablets dating as far back as 3800 B.C., as well as ancient Chinese and Indian traditions, furnish conclusive evidence of this historical fact. What the world at large paid to the temple, or to the palace, in the Jewish patriarchal age became a religious rite. Abraham gave the tenth to Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem. The author of the Hebrew letter relates this in the seventh chapter. True, the Hebrew writer is arguing for the superiority of Christ, but he does not deny the significance of the tithe.

Jacob, Abraham's grandson, at Bethel, pledged a tenth of all he should receive (Gen. 28:22). The tithe was not purely a Jewish institution. When the law was given (Deut. 5:3) there was a tithe commanded as a Jewish statute. It was a national and a social tithe (Deut., chapters 12 and 14). Each head of a Jewish

family was bound by direct commandment to give a tenth of his yearly increase to the purposes of religion. It is generally agreed that Deuteronomy does not speak of two tithes, but one tithe each year with different destinations. They were to maintain the feasts (Deut. 14:22-23) and trespass offerings. It appears that once every three years the tithe was levied for the support of the Levites. Out of their tithe the Levites were to dedicate a tenth to God for the use of the priests.

The Jewish tithes were legalistic. They were never held as binding upon early Christians. However, the tithe remained as a principle of giving to the work of the kingdom.

2. Christians Not Under Law But Grace

Paul argues that when one becomes a new person in Christ, that when one has been raised from the life of sin he has died to the law. We no longer serve

> "under the old written code but in the new life of the spirit" (Rom. 7:1-6).

We have been set free from the old law of sin and death (Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:24).

Under grace, the standard of stewardship is that all one has is sacred to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:20). Jesus announced this principle when he said

> "So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

Under this principle stewardship includes the acquiring of money, its spending, and its saving. It is a recognition of God's sovereignty over the whole of life, and the test of stewardship is love (1 Cor. 13:3-5).

Holmes Rolston, in *Stewardship in the New Testament Church,* points out that there is no reference to the law of the tithe in Paul's writing. However, Paul does give

considerable emphasis to stewardship. Since Paul or the other apostles do not reaffirm the tithe, Rolston reminds us that this does not decide the case either for or against the tithe as a broad principle for stewardship. Since it was a principle, the apostles were not under compulsion to command it. It appears to have been an accepted thing. A commandment for this principle is no more needed than a commandment to prove that God is creator and that "the earth is the LORD'S."

3. The Tithe a Minimum for Giving

Since the Christian recognized he was one no longer under the law, Christian love compelled him to do more than the law. Therefore, the tithe remained as the minimum basis for the stewardship of money. The early church went even beyond this standard. In Acts 2:43-47 we read how the early church pooled its material possessions in the interest of the infant church. This practice of having a community of goods, which was in response to a great need, probably never spread beyond Jerusalem. However, the self-sacrificing spirit did not remain there but it became the common attitude of all the early churches. The early church went beyond the tithe (2 Cor. 8:1-12).

Aristides, the Athenian orator who lived in the early part of the second century, wrote a description of the Christians of his day to Emperor Hadrian. He points out that the secret for the wide spread of Christianity was the character of the Christians, their unceasing prayer, their love for God, and their Christian sharing with those in need. He said, "They do not refuse to help the widows. They rescue the orphans from him who does him violence. He who has gives ungrudgingly to him who has not."

The tithe is an evidence of our sincerity. The average person is not inhibited in tithing for fear of legalism. His

reason for not tithing is more probably his natural covetousness. Tithing is an evidence of spiritual growth. Giving beyond the tithe is an evidence of spiritual maturity. Tithing leads to the enlargement of life.

D. Elton Trueblood tells a story of a German woman who having fled her native land became a refugee in his home. This woman had traveled by every means available across eastern Europe, through the Arabian Sea to Singapore and across the Pacific to California until finally she reached the Trueblood home. Upon her arrival she had only one piece of luggage, a large ball of blue yarn from which she had kept knitting each day. At night she would carefully unravel what she had knit and roll it back on the ball. The reason for her strange behavior was that in the center of the ball she had concealed an old-fashioned diamond brooch, which was everything she owned. As soon as possible after her arrival at the Trueblood home she set out to sell her pin. It is easy to understand that she marketed this one possession with great care. Only when she believed she had found the best possible price did she sell it.

Our lives are like the diamond pin. The one life we have is our only real wealth. Everything depends upon how we invest it. Christian stewardship offers us the highest price. Through Christian stewardship we invest our time, talents, and our money to the greatest advantage for ourselves and the world.

4. Wealth Dedicated to Building the Kingdom

In this life and in the life to come one's highest reward is related to his stewardship of material things (Luke 16:11; Rom. 14:12; 1 Cor. 4:2).

In Acts 11:29-30 we see the stewardship teachings of the apostles at work. Paul, whose training under the Jewish order and law brought him into an intimate

acquaintanceship with the principle and practice of tithing, teaches this first Gentile church to do not less than the tithe, but more. Paul would not have given them a lesser principle of stewardship than that which had been given under the law. So, they gave according to their ability. True, this first giving was for the relief of needy brethren in Judea, but all giving is related to the basic idea that the whole world is in deep spiritual and material need.

In this atomic age it is a temptation to say, "What's the use?" Why should we give our youth and our money to help make the world a better place when it can be blown to bits in a flash? Nevertheless each individual is held responsible to God for the disposition of his own life and his own wealth though the world might be blown to bits the next moment. He is under the compulsion of Christian love to use his talents and his money in the advancement of the Kingdom to the very last second of time. We are to live as stewards in any kind of world.

There are many today who can testify to the value of the tithing experience. More than forty years ago Edward J. Hested and his young wife, Ruth, began business in a small store in Fairbury, Nebraska. Each Saturday night they paid themselves $18.00 of which $1.80 was promptly set aside for the Lord. The first year they showed $300 profit. They tithed this amount and put the rest back into the business. Today there are seventy Hested stores in Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, and Iowa, and in 1950, the earnings of this chain of stores made possible more than $40,000 in tithes. Mr. Jess Lee, president of Hested stores, a tither for years, sees that the tithes are given to Christian work throughout the communities where the Hested stores operate. Mrs. Ruth Hested, Edward's widow, says, "Those who try the ten per cent plan will find it such a heart-warming experience in ad-

venturous living that they will wonder why they never followed God's plan before."

Some time before the Communists took over China, Oswald J. Goulter wrote a letter to the *World Call*, the national missionary magazine of the Disciples of Christ, in which he told about "miracles you paid for." He was writing in particular about the marvelous work of healing done in the university hospital in Nanking. This same work has been duplicated over and over in other missionary hospitals around the world. The blind have been given sight and the crippled made to walk. This work along with the greater work of teaching men how to follow Christ has been made possible because of the dedication of wealth in Christian stewardship.

Questions

1. Is there any place in the New Testament which would lead us to believe the New Testament church practiced less than the tithe?

2. Are there those in the church who practice isolationism with respect to the world-wide mission of Christianity?

3. Did the apostles leave the task of extending the Kingdom to a few disciples in each generation or to all the people of the church?

4. If those who ministered in the temple in the Old Testament were supported by tithes, is Paul arguing for the same kind of support for the Christian ministry in 1 Corinthians 9:1-14?

5. If Jesus is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:20) and Melchizedek received tithes, is this an argument for tithes in support of the church?

13. The Cross and Stewardship

For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.—2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.—Galatians 2:20.

WILLIAM E. PARK in *Narrow Is the Way* tells about a distinguished scientist who was conducting a forum in a large city a few years ago. He had stated his belief in a power back of the universe which was able to conserve forever the spiritual and personal values within it. In the question period he was asked, "How can you say there is a trustworthy divine administration back of this universe, who guarantees the permanence of spiritual values, when a character as perfect as Jesus suffered defeat?" The speaker paused a minute and then replied, "In the light of what Jesus accomplished during his days on the earth and in the centuries since, do you really think Jesus was defeated?"

The cross was not the defeat of Jesus; it was the instrument of his victory. The cross has become a means of man's redemption and a way of victorious living. Many novels begin with the ascendancy of the villain but end with the victory of the hero. So it is with Christ. The cross was no more than a temporary setback. The only defeat Jesus ever suffers is the failure of his disciples to live the way of the cross.

The cross of Christ is the central fact of human history. As the principle of sacrifice runs through all of life, so the cross of Christ becomes the major fact of human experience and runs through all of human history. While lower forms of life die that higher forms might live, in the spiritual realm it was necessary for God's Son to die that man might live spiritually (Luke 24:46-48).

1. The Cross Central to Christ's Mission

The apostles gave major emphasis to the cross of Christ and to the resurrection which followed. To them this was the most stupendous fact about him. They were little concerned about the circumstances of his birth, they said little about his miracles, they repeated a minimum of his sayings, but they spoke at length and frequently about his death upon the cross and its meaning for them and us. To the apostles the cross was Christ's great redemptive act (1 Cor. 1:18; Gal. 1:4; Ephesians 5:2; Phil. 2:4-8; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:26; 1 Pet. 3:18).

Jesus suffered voluntarily, moved by a divine love which is beyond our comprehension (Matt. 20:28; John 3:16). Jesus was impressed with the fact that man was the slave to sin (John 8:34). He knew that only one who came from God could save man from his sins. He was that one. He came as the great physician to heal man of his sin sickness. Many physicians catch the sickness of their patients and die. It was the sin-sickness of man that brought about the death of Jesus.

2. His Disciples and the Cross

Read Matthew 10:38; 16:24.

A mother whose child was an invalid said, "This is my cross; I must bear it." A father lost a son in the Korean war. He said, "This is my cross." These and other similar burdens are not crosses in the true New Testament meaning. The cross is voluntarily assumed. It is a

service or a burden resulting from one's own *choice*. To make sacrifices for Christ is expressing the mind of Christ and is bearing our cross (Matt. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:12).

Perry Burgess in his book *Who Walk Alone* describes what took place in the leper colony of Cullion in the Philippine Islands when the President of the United States called in all the gold coins for the United States Treasury. A government inspector was sent to the colony. Among the lepers was a young woman named Marcia and her father. Burgess relates how with her face alight Marcia took from her ears, her neck, her hands and arms, her earrings, chains and bracelets. She said, "Before I came here, I was to have married. My intended husband gave these to me. Is it enough?" The inspector protested that it was not necessary to give jewelry. "Of course," he said, "if you wish to turn it in, we are very glad to receive it." "I wish," Marcia replied firmly. "It is true that I like jewelry. It is also true that my father and I have found health and happiness in this island. If the United States needs gold we wish to send it."[1] The leper colony gave over $3,000 worth of gold. This was a voluntary act of love. Their leprosy was not the cross. Their giving was.

We are reminded of what Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, and the others gave up for the sake of the gospel. Although we know nothing of Paul's financial station in life, he was of pure Hebrew stock of the tribe of Benjamin, and he also enjoyed Roman citizenship. He gave up friends, family, a life of comparative ease, and voluntarily endured many hardships and much suffering. Paul and the other apostles knew the true meaning of the cross. For them it meant to die to the things of this world so that they might live to the things of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

[1]Published by Henry Holt and Co. Used by permission.

4. The Cross in Christian Stewardship

Cross-bearing is the mark of true discipleship (Luke 14:27). In every instance where Jesus spoke of taking up the cross as a test of discipleship he used it in a sense of voluntary life surrender. Since the cross was assumed by the voluntary action of Christ, so is stewardship a voluntary act on the part of his followers.

George A. Williams in the midst of the depression sent out an urgent last-minute appeal in an effort to forestall another addition to his church deficit. "A day or two later," he said, "an elderly lady, from an Ontario town nearly one hundred miles away, came into my office in Toronto. She said that she and her husband had been deeply moved by our appeal and felt that something must be done about it. They had already contributed all the money they could spare, but felt that this still was not enough.

"She then opened her purse and took out a beautiful diamond ring, which she placed on my desk, saying: 'This was my mother's diamond engagement ring, which she gave me when she was called home. I want you to take it and sell it for what you can get, and use the money for missionary work.'

"I protested that this was too great a sacrifice for anyone to make. 'Sacrifice, nothing!' she said. 'If Mary could break her alabaster box of ointment to show her love for her Lord, I can give my mother's ring.'

"The proceeds of the sale of the ring was sufficient to maintain one of our native workers in Africa for two years."[1] This was bearing the cross.

At Stornaway, just across from Lewis Island, Scotland, is Arnish Lighthouse. It rises in conical shape high upon a rock right over the sea and is unique in that there is no light in it and no keeper there. Though there is no light

[1] *Stewardship Facts, 1950.*

in it, yet it flashes out its warning and invitation to the masters of fishing crafts and other sailors. How does it get its light? On Lewis Island, across the channel, is a powerful light. In the Arnish Lighthouse there is a mirror so arranged that the light from Lewis Island strikes upon it and as it revolves it gives the appearance of a light within and flashes out over the sea. Just as the Lewis Island light shines upon the Arnish Lighthouse so that ships at sea may sail safely through the channel, God so shines into our lives and makes us agencies of blessings to others. Our lives are to reflect the glory of the gospel and to reveal the power of the cross.

The cross is a call to every Christian to accept stewardship as the way of life. Much depends upon what one considers important. Things that people want and for which they are ready to sacrifice other wants are indexes to the kind of persons they are. Richard L. Ownbey in *A Christian and His Money* says, "What you want, that you are." Jesus put it this way,

> "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21).

Within limitations we are also quite well able to do the things we want to do. The individual who says he is too busy to pray does not want to pray badly enough. The one who has no time for church does not want to worship. The person who has no time to render a special service has not felt the challenge of that opportunity. The individual who has no money for the church does not want to share in the Christian enterprise. These are signs of failure to accept the cross.

Much of our conventional religion has been too readily satisfied with easy tasks. On Sunday morning, if the weather is pleasant and the sermon subject inviting, a company of well-dressed people can be assembled with-

out too much difficulty. Many of them may not feel any profound sense of need. But the cross of Christ summons them to subordinate pleasure to duty, the lower to the higher, and the less to the greater. The cross appeals to Christians to stand out clearly, steadily, strongly, for that quality of life set before us in Jesus Christ and demonstrated in the lives of the apostles and in the early church.

Muriel Lester, who is called the "Jane Addams" of England, was born in a home of luxury. Her father was a wealthy shipbuilder. But there are great slums in London. Miss Lester saw the plight of the tenement dwellers and could not remain content in her own luxurious surroundings, so she gave all her inherited wealth to the founding of Kingsley Hall. With ten other social workers she lived frugally, spending about $7.50 a month only on her personal needs. Today, Muriel Lester is known the world over for her service to mankind and for her Christian stewardship.

Christian stewardship is all-inclusive. It takes in all of life: time, talents, influence, property, and money.

Since stewardship is all-inclusive it is also universal in outreach. The cross of Christ is for the good of all mankind. Stewardship has the whole wide world in its scope.

Rear-Admiral Benton W. Decker (retired) served with General MacArthur in the military occupation of Japan. He was perhaps the best known American in Japan next to MacArthur himself. Recently he reported that the Japanese people needed a new philosophy of life more than food, factories, and other material advantages. He said it could come only from Christianity. He also said, "The missionary will still be in Japan after the American soldier is gone. The missionary is the most important soldier in Japan today. Through the missionary, we

have given Japan our greatest gift—Christianity." The missionary must be supported in Japan by Christian stewardship.

In the scripture passages with which we began this chapter the apostle tells us that Christians no longer live to themselves but to Christ. Self-love is crucified. The new life is a life of faith and stewardship. It is the way of the cross.

Questions

1. How do the wages and salaries paid by the local church compare with wage and salary scales in effect in the community?
2. How do the different ways in which the local church with which the class is affiliated secure funds compare with the standards of Christian stewardship?
3. What were the compelling motives back of the witnessing power and stewardship practices of the first century church?
4. Can you see any relation between Malachi 3:10 and Matthew 10:38?
5. Someone has said, "Christianity was born in stewardship." How is this true?

Audio-Visual Materials

Films—

For Good or Evil, 16mm., sound, BW., 48 min. User's guide. A dramatic story of the good and bad use of money. A near tragedy in a young man's life helps teach three men that money is to be used as a trust from God. Infant baptism in one scene.

And Now I See, 16mm., sound, BW., 37 min. How a man grew in stewardship concepts and practice. What increased stewardship does in missions, benevolence, and education is portrayed.

Salt of the Earth, 16mm., sound, BW., 50 min. How a man discovers the meaning of Christian stewardship through an injury to a friend.

Like a Mighty Army, 16mm., sound, BW., 48 min. An enthusiastic young man sparks the building of a new church through a vigorous practice of stewardship.

God Is My Landlord, 16mm., sound, color, 45 min. Perry Haydon's tithing experiment with a cubic inch of wheat is told in this film. Especially good for rural groups.

Operation Mercy, 16mm., sound, BW., 18 min. The story of world relief through the Christian Rural Overseas Program.

Rich Young Ruler, 16mm., sound, BW., 27 min. The story of the young man who had great possessions, with additions to the actual Bible account.

The Hidden Heart, 16mm., sound, BW., 30 min. Discussion and worship guide. The story of how a modern family learned "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The Secret of the Gift, 16mm., sound, 30 min. Color and BW. How a physician inspires fellow church members to greater stewardship.

Split-Level Family, 16mm., sound, 29 min. Color and BW. A family decides between a new house and more faithful stewardship.

Filmstrips—

I Give Myself, 77 frames, BW., 2—12″ records 78 rpm. How the church can meet the human needs through giving of time, talents, prayer, and goods.

Stewardship for Jeannie, 57 frames, color, 2—12″ records. How Jeannie learns what stewardship means in setting up a home. Especially good for young people and young adults.

More for Your Money, 73 frames, BW., 2 records 78 rpm. How an Every Member Canvass is conducted in the church. Good for training workers and starting discussion.

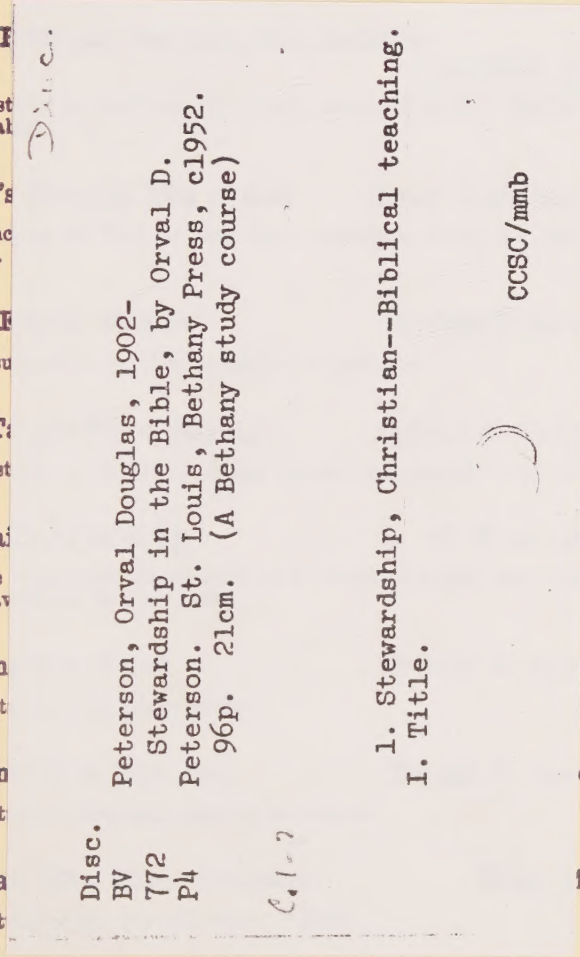
The Miracle of Warren Walker, 56 frames, BW., script or 2 records 78 rpm. A carpenter learns that he gives himself with his money to help meet medical, educational, and evangelistic needs of the world.

Two Dollars, 67 frames, color, 2—78 rpm records. How the Browns and the Gays use their money. Developed with humor and insight.

Joyful Giving, 73 frames, BW., script. How stewardship helps in giving material assistance to overseas relief.

A Christian and His Money, 38 frames, BW., with manual. How a Christian gets, spends, and shares his money. Tithing is emphasized. Good questions for discussion included.

Bethany Study Courses



Makers of a Nation — Glenn McRae

A study of the men who developed the Hebrew nation—Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon.

75 cents